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**MUSLIMS IN BRITAIN
BETWEEN REALITY AND AMBITION**

By

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in the

Arabic & Islamic Department

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

'	ء	f	فا
b	ب	q	قا
t	ت	k	كا
th	ث	l	لا
j	ج	m	ما
ḥ	ح	n	نا
Kh	خ	h	ها
d	د	w	وا
dh	ذ	y	يا
r	ر	a	ا
z	ز	i	ا
s	س	u	ا
sh	ش	ā	ا
ṣ	ص	ī	ي
ḍ	ض	ū	ي
ṭ	ط	ay	ي
ẓ	ظ	aw	و
‘	ع	h	ه
gh	غ			

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ABSTRACT

The study of Muslims in the United Kingdom 'Between Reality and Ambition' represents one of the most important and challenging subjects in the arena of public concern. Yet if we were to move beyond the geographical boundaries of the subject of this research we would surely find similar concerns, hopes and visions being represented in a large part of the Islamic and western world.

A reading of present realities testifies a straggle between ideological success and failure. This straggle has played a decisive role in the condition of the Muslim community in the United Kingdom. Similarly the principles of *Da'wah* (propagation) and its priorities, the human environment to which these efforts are directed and the freedom afforded for such activities in the west constitute fundamental points of reference for an understanding of the Islamic project in the west. In addition, the western outlook on life, and its philosophical bases, influences and communicative methods all provide genuine indicators of the challenges confronting Muslims in the west.

The presence of various Islamic groups in the United Kingdom reflects, in one way or another, a representation of the Islamic world in all its dimensions, visions, thoughts and culture. Thus it may be truly fitting to advance certain vital proposals specifying the parameters of Islamic activity in the west. They may lead to increased understanding and a closing of the ranks between the various groups. This study will further take into account the vital question of educational training which is in itself a major handicap of Muslims everywhere.

While this research lays no claim to finality, it nevertheless has at least opened the doors for further discussion and enquiry that may eventually lead to an improvement in the conditions of Muslims in the west. Similarly, it is the author's hope that this study will have illuminated several important aspects of life of Muslims in the United Kingdom, and that by so doing, it will have inspired and assisted the various Islamic Centres and charitable associations in their efforts to wards progress and development.

**CHAPTER
ONE**

**INTRODUCTION
AND
GENERAL FRAMEWORK**

It is a sign of mercy and grace from God the Almighty that He has entrusted the Muslim community with the task of preserving and implementing the teachings of the great religion of Islam. He has also imparted to the Muslim nation the ways and means of translating the ideas and of the Islamic religion into reality. God the Almighty has further defined the aims and objectives of the Muslims; He has also made clear the appropriate methods which they should use to achieve these aims and objectives. The content of this introduction is therefore endorsed by *Qur'ānic* texts which Muslims unreservedly believe to be definite and absolute truths. Reference is thus made to the verse which says:

“There is not a living creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the book, then unto their Lord they all shall be gathered.”

(6: 38)

God also says:

“And remember the day when we shall raise up from every nation a witness against them from amongst themselves. And we shall bring you as a witness against these. And we have send down to you the book as an exposition of everything, a guidance, a mercy, and glad tidings for those who have submitted themselves.”

(16: 89)

This sense of the Muslim community’s cultural identity has been stressed by the Prophet (MPBUH)* throughout his career. This emphasis appears in various Traditions of the Prophet. One of these affirms that “All members of my nation (community, *Umma*) shall go to Paradise, except him who declines”. The Prophet was then asked about the meaning of “him who declines”. He answered: “He who obeys me shall go to Paradise. But he who disobeys me is deemed to have declined” (i.e. refused to go to Paradise). On more than one occasion, the Prophet said to the believers: “Pray (i.e. say your prayers) in the same way as you have seen my praying.” He also said in one occasion: “Adopt from me all your *Manāsik*. The Holy *Qur’ān* has ordered the Muslims to follow the teachings and methods indicated by the Prophet. Thus the Muslims are exhorted by God in the Holy *Qur’ān*:

* It is recommended by the scholar that when aver the Prophet’s name is mentioned must be associated with the say **May Peace Be Upon Him** (MPBUH)

“Indeed in the Messenger of Allāh you have a good example to follow for him who hopes in Allāh and the last day and remembers Allāh much.”

(33: 21)

“Whatsoever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatsoever he forbids you, abstain, and fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is severe in punishment.”

(59:7)

With regard to men of learning, the scholars who are in Arabic called “*Ahl al-‘Ilm*,” the Holy *Qur’ān* has exhorted the Muslims to resort to them in order to obtain from them whatever advice and the support they may need, God says:

“It is not for the believer to go out to fight all together. Of every troop of them, a party only should go forth, that they may get instructions in religion, and that they may warn their people when they return to them, so that they may beware.”

(9: 122)

These verses, it is proposed, will be interpreted as being part of the main sources of the Muslims’ identity, both individually and collectively. The Holy *Qur’ān*, whose doctrine represents a body of absolute truths which are altogether valid, and which cannot, in any conceivable way, contain

anything false, is our fundamental source. The *Sunnah*, the sayings and life of the Prophet and of the Companions, constitutes the second primary source. We have also access to the efforts made by Muslim Scholars in various historical periods in the field of Islamic Exegesis. They have interpreted, explained and commented upon the texts of the primary sources. By so doing, they have enlightened us and paved the way for us. The scholarly legacies which we have inherited have been adopted by the consensus of the Muslim people across the ages, hence we adhere to their rulings, and refer to their research findings. Furthermore we are obliged to make use of opinions and researches of contemporary scholars who have interpreted for us the Holy *Qur'ān* and the Traditions. With regard to any research dealing with Islamic action in the West, these have been the sources which have, for us, defined the objectives, set the aims, cleared the ground, indicated the priorities, and indicated the proper and right methods to be used by both individuals and communities. They are still the main source of guidance as to all that pertains to the life of Muslims in the Islamic heartland and in the Islamic communities in the West.

Islamic action in the West is determined by this framework of ideas and principles which should guide the life of all members of the Muslim

community. The principles and doctrines inculcated in them by the Muslim religion are bound to protect them from the errors and pitfalls into which they would otherwise fall. For the environment in which the new Muslim generations in the West will grow up is pervaded by what may be called demagogic thought. Excessive in discipline is in fact the right word in this context; the painful experience through which Western society has passed, from the spiritual point of view, has been responsible, in this respect, for a deplorable state of affairs.

Judged in this light, Islamic action in the West aims at presenting Islam in its true and great form, its credible image, both in words and in deeds. This true picture will be presented in an integrated manner both as regards the method to be adopted and the content to be conveyed. The principles of the Islamic faith are meant to guide Muslims along the right path such that they pass from the stage of obscurantism and ignorance into that of knowledge and enlightenment. The sublime truth of the Islamic faith, its values and doctrines, will bring about a real change such that the secularism of the Western culture will be exposed for what it is, will be exploded as a myth, will be shown to be resting upon narrowly circumscribed categories of thinking to which the all-

embracing and universal values of Islam will be demonstrated to be superior.

Since Islamic action in the West is geared to realise the objectives indicated above, it must follow the appropriate methods which will ensure the attainment of the noble objectives explained, methods already established by the Prophet of Islam. These were demonstrated and explained in the various stages of his mission; the growth of Islamic awareness was influenced initially by the efforts of individuals and families. After many years of intense struggle and painful sacrifice the early Muslims were able not only to create a dynamic society but also to establish a powerful state in order to attain these same levels of achievement. Islamic efforts in the West must by necessity, evolve through similar stages. Notwithstanding, they will also have to take into account the special features or characteristics of their own societies and experiences.

Any efforts to advance the Islamic cause in the West should be underlined by a deliberate and conscious drive to help non-Muslims in those societies understand the tenets and ideals of the Islamic faith. This task has become even more important at a time when Islam itself is

being subjected to systematic distortion and gross misrepresentation in the Western information media and centres of research.

In many instances the realisation of the Islamic project will be determined by the degree to which the Muslims themselves will be able to articulate and define their programmes and policies.

A detailed analysis of the prerequisites for success will hence be discussed under the following three headings:-

- (a) The concept of Islamic action, its message and its priorities as understood by those who are undertaking it.
- (b) The social conditions needed for the success of Islamic activities.
- (c) The opportunities and the freedom afforded for Islamic activities in the West.

I.1- The Concept of Islamic action, its message and its priorities as understood by those who are undertaking it.

In order to understand the present situation concept of Islamic action, message and priorities, a survey of the historical development and origins of Islamic action in the West was made. Islamic activities in the West grew in prominence during the late fifties and the early sixties in

the wake of the immigration of Islamic movement activists from their countries to the West. These immigrants had been brought up in Muslim communities, where they had acquired a comprehensive understanding of Islamic doctrine, its nature and requirements. They also felt the need, because of the keen interest in and love of Islam, to spread its teachings universally. Hence they began to sow the seeds of Islamic action in the West.

It is widely believed that the weaknesses and failures of Western civilisation were factors which contributed significantly to the growth of Islam in Europe. Its outstanding material and technological advancement appeared insufficient to forestall the perennial problems of crime¹, drug addiction, juvenile delinquency and child abuse. These disadvantages when balanced with the organised efforts of sincere and devoted Islamic workers, served to strengthen the position of the Islamic faith. The prevalent eagerness by young Muslims to understand and practice Islam was in a sense a blessing from God the Almighty for the believers.

¹ See; *Hayat Diyen, The Representation of Crime in Writing in Eighteenth-Century England*, Chapter 3, PhD research, University of Sussex 1993, p.56.

It is a universally acknowledged fact that the workers in the Islamic movement have been brought up in a comprehensive and all-embracing understanding of Islamic religion. They have, as it were, acquired a deep rooted conviction that theirs is a religion of service to all humanity capable of organising human life in all its varied dimensions. This understanding of Islam made itself felt in the work carried out by the first generation of Muslim settlers in the West after they had laid down the foundations of their programmes and activities. Many members of this generation went back to their respective countries, having being deeply influenced by the writings and principles upheld and spread by the leaders of the Islamic movement. In the present circumstances, however, the later generation of Muslims in the West has acquired certain noticeable characteristics which may be considered obstructive and detrimental. Foremost among these are:-

- (a) Philosophic and juridical differences between the schools of thought to which the Muslims adhere; many of these differences have their origin in the early history of Islam. This state of affairs has resulted in different conceptions of Islamic action and of their priorities. A prominent example in this regard relates to the degree of importance

that should be attached to political action on one hand, and religious education on the other.

(b) Intellectual life in the West is characterised by a demagogic spirit which is often manifested in numerous futile discussions and debates. This factor has no doubt influenced, at least in part, the ideas and thoughts of some Muslims, perhaps unconsciously. The effect, however, is invariably quite apparent. This may be due to, or related to the fact that environmental influences exert a powerful impact upon the mentality of people. A tradition of the Prophet refers to this fact, which says that: “The child is born with a certain instinct *Fiṭrah*”, but the influence of his parents is inevitable.

(c) Some Muslims in the immigrant community have conceptions of Islam which are marginal and limited; they consequently are incapable of perceiving Islam in its entirety and completeness. Nevertheless numerous organisations have emerged advocating these very conceptions of Islam. In reality many false conceptions have been propagated. These are in essence deviant and far removed from the true teachings of Islam, which they use as a veil to conceal their false ideas.

It is therefore extremely important, at this stage, to emphasise the need to identify and establish the correct and true conceptions of Islam. Its totality, comprehensives and all-embracing outlook should in fact be lucidly explained by all those engaged in their propagation of Islam in the West. It is also important to ascertain and raise the level of the Muslim commitment to Islam through well structured and organised educational programmes. By doing so those who work in the field of Islamic propagation will have taken a major step towards realising the goals and objectives which they have set themselves.

I.2- The Human Environment Targeted by Islamic Action

In this area of research the important question is posed as to whether it is the sons and daughters of the indigenous population or those of the Muslim community who are targeted by Islamic action in this country, or whether it is both the immigrant and indigenous population that are being targeted. In the latter case the question also arises as to which side should be given priority. Answering these questions is of paramount importance in order that priorities and efforts should be properly considered and organised.

It is obvious that the importance of answering these questions stems from the fact that in spite of their many duties and tasks, propagandistic for Islam have only limited time and resources available before them. If we consider the situation carefully, taking into account the available resources and financial aspect of the Islamic action in the West, then we shall inevitably reach the following conclusion:-

That Islamic action in the West has no alternative but to appeal to the members of Muslim communities resident in the West. As a main target, they should be called upon to provide welfare support for the Muslims to awaken their Islamic consciences, to spread among them the true conception of Islam and to protect those who teach and lead them from the dangers emanating from Western life and its permissive and materialistic philosophy.

The substance of the preceding paragraph, it is worthy of note, constitutes, in fact, the sphere of activity, the area of actual concern for Islamic action in the West. Another useful endeavour which will be undertaken is to provide assistance and support for Muslims in other parts of the world. This may take the form of relief as an example in time of natural disasters. Such solidarity and mutual support is

encouraged by the Prophet *Muḥammad*, when he explains that the part of the believers are like the part of the body, if one part is injured the entire body will suffer from fever².

The achievement of these aims will, however, remain to a large extent incomplete and unfulfilled if it is not accompanied by a call to the indigenous population to embrace Islam. Those Western who respond to the call of Islam should be encouraged and should be given all the necessary support and assistance. They should be instructed in the correct and true interpretations of Islamic doctrines. It should be remembered, however, that the main target for Islamic action should be members of the Muslim immigrant communities now resident in Europe.

² *al-Ashqar, ʿumar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīyah Asīlah*, Kawait 1985.

I.3- Aspects of Western Society, Its Philosophy, World View, Customs And Values.

I.3.1- Introduction

Every country has its own cultural identity which has been shaped and determined by its historical experiences. Western Europe has its own cultural identity which differs in form and essence from that of oriental societies. While social development in the East has generally been coupled with the power of religion, it has been accompanied by the separation of religion from the state in the West. This separation has resulted in the creation of certain structures and institutions which give the community outlook on life.

At the onset of the nineteenth century there emerged signs of an intellectual Islamic awakening; it was one largely brought about by the cultural decadence from which most of the Islamic world was still suffering³. At the time, the Islamic world was also confronted by a number of political and military challenges brought about by the far-reaching scientific and technological progress achieved in the West. The latter had, of course, gained these advances after several centuries of

³ *al- Ashqar, 'ūmar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīah Asīlah*, Kawait 1985.

enlightenment and development in various fields. It was this fact which prompted sections of the Muslim societies at that time to identify themselves, perhaps unconsciously, with the thoughts and attitudes of Western thinkers. They were in many instances quite oblivious of the fact that the methods adopted by the West were not always relevant and appropriate, in their entirety, to solving the problems of the Muslim world. Indeed these Muslims had forgotten or ignored the fundamental characteristics and qualities of their own cultural identity and history.

I.3.2- Factors Influencing Western Attitudes Towards Islam

A number of factors have combined to play a significant and decisive role in shaping and determining Western attitudes towards Islam in the past⁴ and present. Though different European countries have adopted varying attitudes towards Islam, there were evidently certain dominant and common attitudes which have generally been adopted by the West towards Islam from the middle ages until our time. These basic European thoughts and attitudes can be traced back to the medieval period when the church authority and influence was pre-eminent in

⁴ *Hūnikah*, Zaghrād., *Shams al- 'Arab Tasṭu' 'alā al- Gharb*, Beirut 1981, p. 29. And see; *Lūmbār, Mūrīs*, *Al- Islām fī Majdihī al-Awwal*, Trans. Ismā'īl al 'Arabī, Rabat 1990, And see; *Joll, J.*, *Europe Since 1870, An International History*, London, 1990, page 196. "in October 1914 Turkey joined the war on the German side, and this had the effect of reopening the whole Balkan question.

European societies. Through out this period European thoughts and attitudes have been shaped by a secular interpretation of Christian philosophy which draws a line of distinction between the Kingdom of God and this world⁵.

A notable exception to this main body of Western thought which has remained relatively independent and free from the direct influence of the Church is the United Kingdom. The policy of the Anglican Church from the inception of its public mission has been to steer a middle course between two opposite extremes.”⁶ This attitude probably is still predominant in many aspects of social, political and cultural life in the United Kingdom.

In order fully to appreciate the thoughts, values and world view of the West, it is necessary to bear in mind that European historical development has been divided into two broad periods. For while religion symbolises the authority and status of the medieval world, the achievements and strength of its history are symbolised by the gains of the scientific revolution. This historical dichotomy has not been a

⁵ *al- Ashqar, ‘ūmar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīah Asīlah*, Kawait 1985.

⁶ *Bikūfāsh, ‘Alī (Begovic), Al- Islām bayn al-Sharq wa al- Gharb*, Trans. Muḥammad ‘Adass, Beirut 1994. p. 371 and see also *Waz, Rams̄s, al- Lḥad fī al- Garb*, Cairo, 1997. p. 211.

feature of the British experience to the same degree as it has in other parts of Europe.

The call for the unity of church and state started with Oliver Cromwell, who called for a middle course that steered between both, without partiality to the one at the expense of the other. There had been, for example, no Inquisition in England, as was the case elsewhere. Certainly there was no religious extremism on the part of the church in England. Hence, it may be asserted with a fair measure of certainty that the religious reform movement in England had effectively curtailed the impact of both forms of extremism reflected in the dominance of the Papacy and the tyranny of the monarchy.

During the sixteenth and seventies centuries England was therefore seen by many as a progressive and revolutionary outpost in Europe. Today, things have changed dramatically so much so that it is now looked upon as a bastion of conservatism. The word “conservative” is used in this context to mean to preserve established traditions and avoid change.

Roger Bacon, the philosopher was considered one of the most outstanding pioneers of modern English thought. Although he recognised the separation of church and state he, nevertheless, did not

exaggerate the importance of one over the other. He was followed by John Locke and Thomas Hobbes. Among those who are widely known to have adopted a similar moderate outlook on life was the Glasgow Professor, Adam Smith. He developed many of his ideas while teaching ethics and economics, as part of an integrated philosophy course. In two of his most popular books entitled “*The Theory of Moral Sentiment*” and “*The Wealth of Nations*”⁷, Smith proposed there was a definite relationship between ethics and the wealth of nations; his general outlook upon life, which he was able to crystallise after many years of theoretical contemplation and scientific research, is based upon the harmony between science and religion. His two books deeply influenced European thought in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries⁸. On the whole it has emerged from the writings of Smith and others that English socialism was in certain respects distinct from that which was advocated in other parts of Europe. In its theoretical propositions and its practice English socialism has distinguished itself by its temperance and moderation. This is in marked contrasts to the European exposition of socialism which has been exclusively rooted in the soil of historical

⁷ *al-Ashqar, ‘Īmar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīyah Asīlah*, Kawait 1985.

⁸ *Bikūfīsh, ‘Alī (Begovic), Al-Islām bayn al-Sharq wa al-Gharb*, Trans. Muḥammad ‘Adass, Beirut 1994. p. 371.

materialism and atheism. As a result it is not uncommon to hear Labour Party politicians quoting phrases from the Holy Bible in the same way as clerics do.

The themes of duality, moderation and extremism in Western philosophy have been discussed at a great length by Muslim historians. Professor *Abu Al-Hasan Al-Nadawi* was one of those who commented and wrote in detail on this matter. He says:-

The philosophy of Western Society is based upon the loss of balance between power and science, between religion and ethics. The result is that the gulf has widened between them so greatly that a new generation has emerged fully convinced that life as an end itself, with power and science as the main, or only means of achieving that end, without any one or authority with the directive ability to guide men in the use of force or the source of science. The net result of this development has been largely a misconception of the whole project⁹.

⁹ *al- Nadawī, Abū Al-Ḥasan, Mā-dhā Khasira al-‘Ālam bi-Inḥiṭāṭ al-Muslimīn*, Beirut 1984. p. 221.

In a similar vein, Alexis Carrel points out that there has been a lot of suffering in Western society as a result of the lack of balance or harmony between the spiritual and material claims of body and mind.

Our knowledge of life and how a man should live is lagging far behind our knowledge of material things. This state of affairs has been disastrous for Western man.

Hourani¹⁰ has this to say:-

Interest in Islam and its learning began to grow gradually in Europe¹¹. One of the earliest studies of Islam to appear in Western Europe goes back to the year 1587 in Paris, where the teaching of the Arabic language started. This was followed by a course in the Netherlands where a Professorship was established in Leiden for Arabic in 1613. At Cambridge, England, a Professorship in Arabic was established in 1632¹², and another in at Oxford in 1634. Thus began the large scale publications of academic studies on Islam. In this respect, the British Orientalist Edward Pococke (1604-1691) acquired great fame after he

¹⁰ Hourani, Albert, *al- Islām fī al-Fikr al- Gharbī*, London 1994, p.22.

¹¹ Fāḫd, Zakarīā, *al- 'Elmaniah al-Nash'ah wa l-Ather Fī al- Sharq wa l-Gharb*. Cairo 1988, p. 150. See also *Muḥammad Shānah, al- Islām fī al-Fikr al- 'Urbī*, Cairo 1980, p. 130

¹² *al- Ashqar, 'ūmar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīah Asīlah*, Kawait 1985.

had been given the Arabic Chair in Oxford. His extended residence in the East had a remarkably positive effect upon his accuracy of translation from Arabic into English, as well as upon his general knowledge of Arabic. He stayed a long time in Syria, then moved to Istanbul, from where he brought with him a number of manuscripts which were later translated into English. He also wrote a book called “*Specimens of Arab History*” in which he showed great interest in the Arabic science of genealogy and the history of tribes and beliefs before Islam.”

Interest in the study of Arabic language and culture grew rapidly after George Sale’s (1696-1736) translation of the *Qur’ān* into English. This was the first English translation. In the eighteenth century, writings on Arabic and oriental themes multiplied. Writers used the biography of the Prophet *Muḥammad* as an indirect method of criticising Christianity, at least as it was portrayed and propagated by the Church in the Middle Ages. In other words, a picture was given of the Prophet preaching a more rational religion which conformed more to the basic needs of man, embracing as it were all the features of moderation and tolerance. Napoleon’s essays on Islam are probably more illustrative of this tradition than any other if they are considered to be an expression of the

spirit of the times in which he lived. “When he arrived in Egypt, he declared that the French “Worship God more than the Mamluks do, that they respect the Prophet and the *Qur’ān* and that the French were therefore good Muslims”¹³.

Europe’s conception of Islam grew up gradually, taking the form it has assumed today as a result of a number of factors. The foremost determinants of this concept have been the role played by highly organised Christian missions, imperialist expansion and the spread of Western influence and dominance. Two attitudes have consequently been adopted towards Islam. One is that the West began to look at Islam as a historical rival of Christianity. The second attitude is that Islam is looked upon as a new world-outlook, stressing the need to understand the universe, and to strike the required balance between body and spirit. Islam defines the relationship between the two.

As we have already indicated, the West’s relation with the rest of the world changed radically as a result of expansion in world trade, improvement of transport and communications, as well as the spread of

¹³ *al-Jabartī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān, Tārīkh ‘Ajā’ib al-Āthār fī al-Tarājīm wa al-Akḥbār*, Alfarīs, Beirut nd, p.114. And see *Hourani, Albert, al-Islām fī al-Fikr al-Gharbī*, London 1994, p22

British, French and Dutch influence. Another major force was the new religious movement of the Protestants, which stressed the need for human salvation. What was needed was not only a sense of original sin or acceptance of the Gospel, but also the drive for self-assertion and for expansion. Encountering the East was an important step in this direction. Albert Hourani sums this up in his book¹⁴ *Islam in European Thought*, he observing that in the fourteenth century, the nature of Western interest in the Oriental world changed, when the balance of power changed and navigation improved to the extent that the world was discovered by European ships, and trade was expanded into the Mediterranean basin and the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Hence the way was soon cleared for the European colonial settlement of the Indian sub-continent. Dutch, Portuguese, French and British businessmen and traders settled there. It was thus in the context of this global expansion of trade and interaction that Albert Hourani explains the appearance of the Syrian city Aleppo in Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Macbeth*.

This imperial trade expansion, which inevitably resulted in an East-West rivalry was also responsible for the view that Islam and Christianity

¹⁴ *Hourani, Albert, al- Islām fī al-Fikr al- Gharbī*, London 1994, p.20.

were opposed to each other. With the passage of time the Europeans became increasingly aware that Islam was a force to reckon with. This conception first began to manifest itself at the beginning of the Crusades. It was widely believed that if the Muslims adhered to their religion, they would be capable of becoming a veritable world power. This view may have been reinforced by the outcome of the battles with *Ṣalāḥ al- Dīn al- Ayyūbī* during the 3rd Crusade; an encounter which enabled the Muslims to regain Jerusalem after it had been for seventy years under the control of the Christians.

Mention should be made, in the context of this historical background, of the European perception of Muslim power which made itself felt during the Caliphate system. The achievement of Islam in India and Spain were also additional factors which increased the apprehension of the Europeans. What they sought to do was to put an end to Islam, or Islamic power, if possible. The second objective was to make Muslims indifferent to Islam and its obligations. i.e. by making the Muslims less Muslim. The latter was intended, failing the other aims, to contain Islam, to reduce its power, to confine it to limited areas, to prevent it

from spreading. Recent events in Bosnia and Herzegovina are evidence for this¹⁵.

Now that we have surveyed the essential aspects of the East-West relationship and its impact on Muslim communities, we may now survey other important factors which have influenced the Western mind in this respect. An important factor is the reliance of many Westerners upon the many and diverse writings of the orientalists and their commentaries on the Islamic faith and *Sharī'a*; these writings are regarded as the main source of reference for any new item or information to be added to one's knowledge of Islam.

It is a commonplace that these orientalists differed considerably among themselves in their interpretations. Very often they reflected tendencies which were academically diverse and objectively inconsistent. For not all the orientalists were either scientific or objective in their studies of Islam. Thus it was not uncommon to find that they frequently arrived at conclusions about Islam and Muslims which were altogether incorrect. The orientalist Goldzieher, who is well known in many parts of the world, wrote a series of lecture-notes in 1907 which he incorporated in

¹⁵ *al- Dughaym, Muḥammad Maḥmūd, al-Būsnah wa al-Harsak Ḥaqā'iq Ta'rīkhyyah*, Cairo nd, p. 138.

his work on Fiqh or Muslim jurisprudence. *Id Al- Dusuqī* has this to say “It is noteworthy that Goldzieher portrays Islam as though it were emanating from German philosophical contemplation in the nineteenth century, based as it was upon Schleiermacher’s theory of religion.”¹⁶ This theory is based upon the belief that religion derives from, and owns its existence to a sense of helplessness which can assume diverse forms. In the case of Islam, the form assumed the *Taslīm*, resignation or submission, which is a verbal noun of one of the meanings of the root of the word Islam. The implication is that the individual should resign himself to the unlimited power of God. The conclusion is drawn that what we call Islam had its origin in this attitude of resignation, drawing upon elements of religious systems of ancient civilisations like Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, etc. Islam, in the opinion of Goldzieher is an eclectic religion composed of several religions.

It is noteworthy in this connection that some Orientalists unfortunately highlight the role of leaders of Sufism and also portray them as ‘*Ulamā*’ of Islam who represent the true spirit of Islam. The most important of these is represented in the study made by Massignan in 1914 of Yousuf

¹⁶ *al- Dusūqī, Id, Istiqlāl al- Fiqh al- Islāmī ‘an al- Qānūn al-Rūnānī*, Cairo 1989. And see *Hourani, Albert, al-Islām fī al-Fikr al-Gharbī*, London 1994, p. 33.

Al-Hallaj, which was published in 1921¹⁷. It is known that this heretic was executed during the Abbasid period as a result of his antimuslim statements, or of remarks and dictata made by him which ran contrary to Islamic beliefs. He stated for example that the Ka'ba should be destroyed, that God was immanent in his own body frame, and that any person could perform the pilgrimage in his own house.

1- The Role of the Information Media.

The press, radio and television are all playing a crucial role in distorting the true image of the real Islam. They are conveying to their respective audiences pictures of the *Sharī'ah* and of the teachings of Islam which are totally different from what Islam actually stands for. The media in the Western world are perpetually on the lookout for any mistake, error, or oversight on the part of Muslims, magnifying and exaggerating everything that happens in the Muslim countries, and blaming Islam for it. On most occasions they provide no adequate evidence or effort to establish or verify the truth. The serious nature of the media campaign of Islamophobia is not so much bound up with reporting news which is false, but rather more importantly with the fact that people's attitudes

¹⁷ Hourani, Albert, *al- Islām fī al-Fikr al- Gharbī*, London 1994, p.60.

are invariably shaped all the time by the media as a whole. The naïve and uncritical reader or listener thus adopts certain attitudes towards many things which are more in conformity with the views of the media than with the pursuit of truth.

The Newyork bombing in the USA is a classic example of the hostility and prejudice which are adopted towards Islam and Muslims. A gross injustice was committed as a result of stereotyped attitudes, listing in the condemnation of Muslims as perpetration of this terrorist act. The result of the subsequent investigations, however, has shown that these accusations were based upon illusions which directly contradict the truth, and that the real culprits have no connection with Islam whatsoever. If we care to consider the dynamism of the mass media and the rules approved for news follow-up, and the speed of conveyance of scoops etc., we shall find that these methods run counter to the simplest rules and procedures required for accuracy in transmitting and reporting news.

In another area the media steadfastly pursues its strategy of misinformation by popularising stories depicting romantic and sensual scenes supposedly taken from the heyday of Islamic civilisation. They

have deliberately sought to concentrate on periods of Islamic history when tendencies of permissiveness and indulgence had crept into the fabric of several Muslim communities.

This state of affairs has been exaggerated to suit more the sensual imagination of Westerners than the actual circumstances as they really existed. The image of this romantic past has been portrayed in scenes of grand palaces and luxurious living. These European perceptions were apparently inspired by reading of texts such as *Maqāmāt al- Ḥarīrī*, *Maqāmāt al- Hamadhānī* and *'lif Layla'h wa Layla'h* which were written the 10th century as mentioned in *al- Mas'ūdī's* book *Murūj al-dhahab*¹⁸. For the most parts these texts devoted great attention to the preoccupation of the Oriental courts with singing¹⁹ and dancing performances. Whatever indulgences may have existed, it seems absurd to suggest that this was the basic pattern of life of all Muslims throughout history. Certainly it would be both misleading and erroneous to generalise in this matter since the present realities of the Muslim world are not always reflective of the past. Nevertheless, the media ignore the dangerous and misleading implications of their unrealistic

¹⁸ *Lobon, Ghustaf, Haḍārat al- 'Ārāb*, Cairo 1969, p. 448.

¹⁹ For example, Abū al-ffaraj al-Isfahānī said: They sold the jariih for more than one hundred thousand Dirhams, *al- Aghānī*, Vol. 10, Cairo nd, pp. 13-162.

approach to Muslims, who are portrayed as a group of materialists permanently engaged in bloody feuds and the pursuit of women.

The attempt to establish a connection between Islam and terrorism with the aim of making them two sides of the same coin is one of the fundamental methods adopted to distort the image of Islam. It is extremely difficult to find any source or text sanctioning any connection between Islam and violence. The sources of Islam which are *Qur'ān*, Sunnah, consensus and analogy do not contain such teachings. There may be irresponsible malpractices here and there, as in any doctrine or religion, but this has nothing to do with the essential character of the faith itself. For we must, in this context, distinguish between real Islam and the malpractices of Muslims. True Islam, contains or commands no unjust human behaviour. Neither does it sanction eccentricity and arbitrariness. The basic reason for this is the fact that it is the Truth revealed by God. The *Qur'ān* affirms:

***“Falsehood cannot come to it from before it or behind it sent down by the all-wise,
worthy of all praise.”***

(41:42)

“Do they not then consider the Qur’ān carefully? Had it been from other than Allah, they would surely have found therein much contradictions”.

(4:82)

Hence the responsibility and blame for malpractice, or misapplication of Islamic principles should be borne not by itself, but instead by those who carry out these actions. In reality, Islam has absolutely nothing to do with violence, killing of innocent people or any bombing of civilians. In the early period of Islam, the Muslim leaders were kind, generous and merciful people. The methods of fighting taught by the Prophet reveal this. To a detachment going to war, he once said:

“Conquer in the name of *Allāh*. Do not kill a baby, an old or an aged man or a woman. Do not cut down a tree. You will find folk, among the people, devoted to worship. Leave them to do what they have vowed to do”.

2- The Tendency to Learn Oriental Languages

The tendency to study Oriental languages and cultures, particularly after the establishment of a number of Arabic professorships in Germany, France and the United Kingdom, has been an important factor influencing attitudes towards Islam. These university chairs have made

it possible, A generally fair and new objective view of Islam through rigorous scholarship. The academics have avoided the pitfalls of media hype and fantasy. They have managed to reflect authentic and accurate views concerning Islam. Its eternal values have been made known as a result of translations of the *Qur'ān*. Thus it has been possible for many Westerners at various levels of education or culture to read the translated texts, referring to them directly and using them as sources of knowledge, without the intervention of mediators or any other third party. In a general sense, therefore, many of these studies have helped tremendously to change and correct certain popular misconceptions which were for the most part opposed to the spread of Islam and its divine law.

We have seen how the relationship between Europe and the Muslim East has developed over the years this course of development has assumed three main forms²⁰:-

1. Religious Wars: these started in the early Islamic period.

²⁰ For more details see *Hourani, Albert, al-Islām fī al-Fikr al-Gharbī*, London 1994, p. 17

2. Trade Relations: these developed particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD. Ships sailed in the Mediterranean carrying goods for trade between East and West, especially when Italy expanded its seaports.
3. Cultural and Intellectual Exchange: this crystallised clearly in the translation movement from the sixteenth century. In this period Western scholars studied in Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Egypt to benefit from Oriental knowledge and learning.

3- Immigration

After the Second World War, Islam's position in the United Kingdom became much more thoroughly entrenched. This was largely due to an increasing of Muslim immigrants from the Islamic world (see Figure 1 and 2 page 35). The problems and uncertainties brought about by political instability, economic stagnation and natural disasters in many instances forced thousands of immigrants into flight for better opportunities. In the initial stages very little notice was taken of the introduction of the Islamic religion and culture into Western society. Although the original intent of many immigrants was to reside

temporarily in Europe and then return to their homelands, a very significant number of them chose eventually to settle in countries such as the United Kingdom. No sooner had they settled than they began to take a series of initiatives to establish religious and social institutions such as Mosques and schools (see Figure 3 page 36). These they felt were natural prerequisites in order to secure their religious status and rights²¹. Indeed, they also considered these steps as vital necessities for the preservation of their religion and culture in a minority situation. The main target was to safeguard Islamic cultural identity from the secularist influence of the host society. At the end of the day their foremost concern was to live as Muslims and raise their children as Muslims.

In order to keep the flame of Islam burning from the hearts of one generation to another, they had to establish the Mosque and the school. The Mosque is the Community Centre for worship and also for social, cultural, political and artistic activities. The school on the other hand is the place where the coming generations are taught the precepts of Islam.

²¹Some scholars set a conditions, as fallows:

First: to preserve the five fundamentals of Islam.

Second: to be able to practise Islam freely.

Third: to have knowledge which will enable the Muslim to be combat criticism.

See a paper by Sheikh Abdallah Bn Bayyah, Muslim minorities conference, London 1995 and also see Islamic Youth International Symposium, Sheikh Abdal Aziz Bn Baz, London 1994.

The fact that a significant number of Muslims immigrated for economic reasons did not in itself preclude them from participating in the propagation of Islam, just as was the case with the Muslim West and East African merchants. Those merchants who have come to the West may hence endeavour to play a similar role in their new places of domicile.

3.1- Graphs

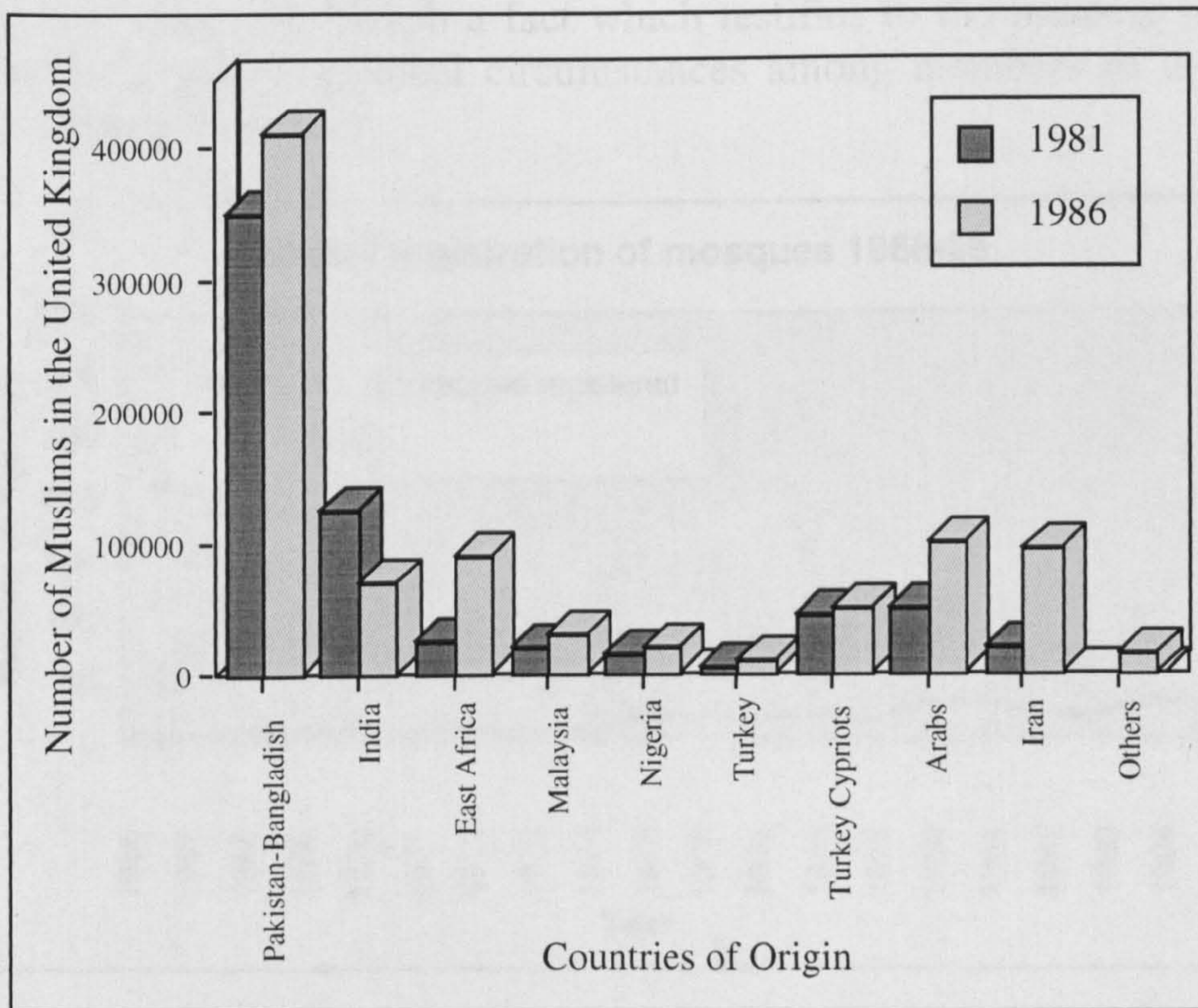


Figure (1) . As seen from the Graph, there was a sharp increase in the number of Muslim immigrants into Western countries, from 1981 to 1986

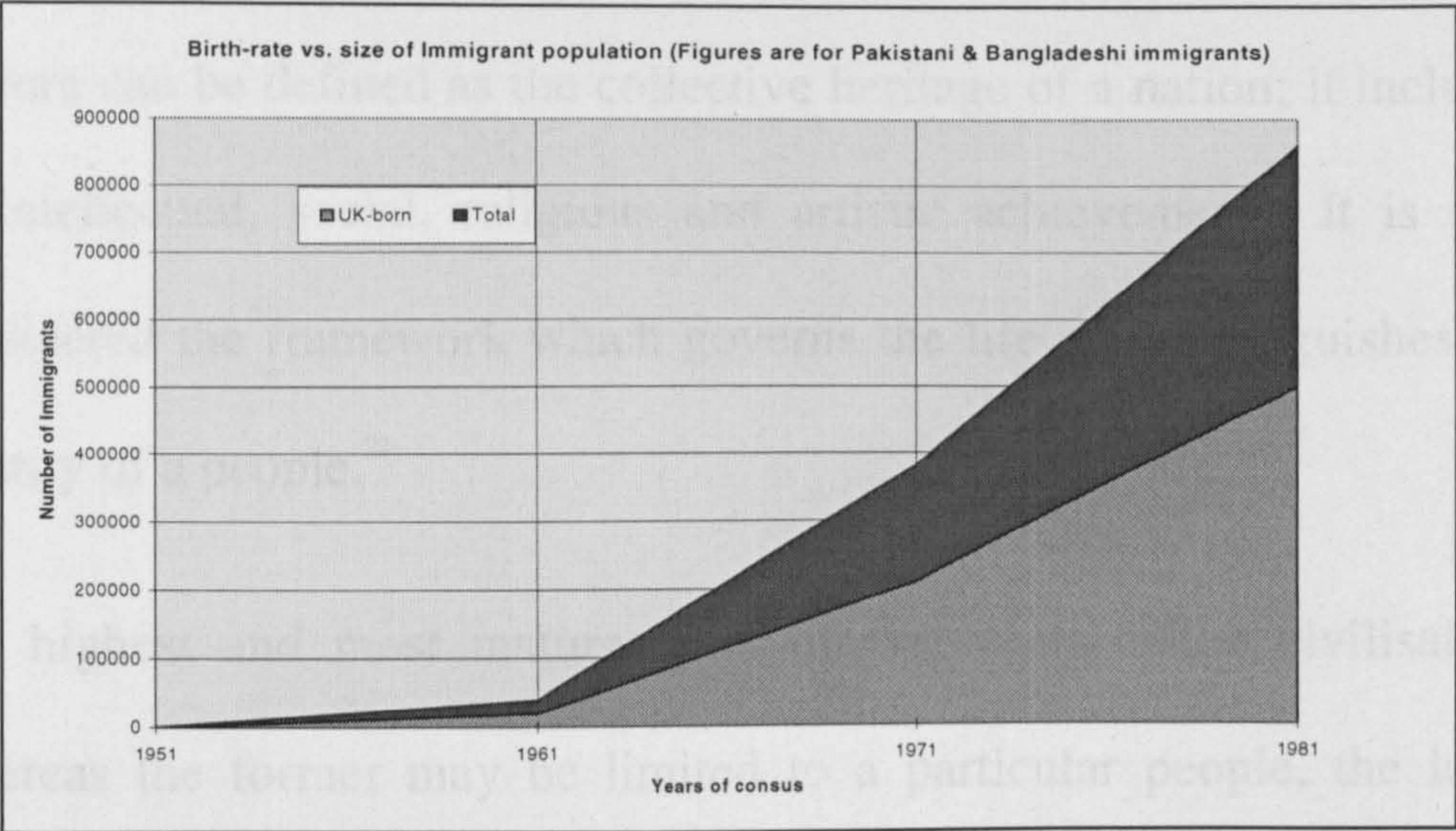


Figure (2) . The Number of Muslims born in Western countries is clear from the Graph-a fact which testifies to the increase in hygiene and educational circumstances among members of the Muslim community

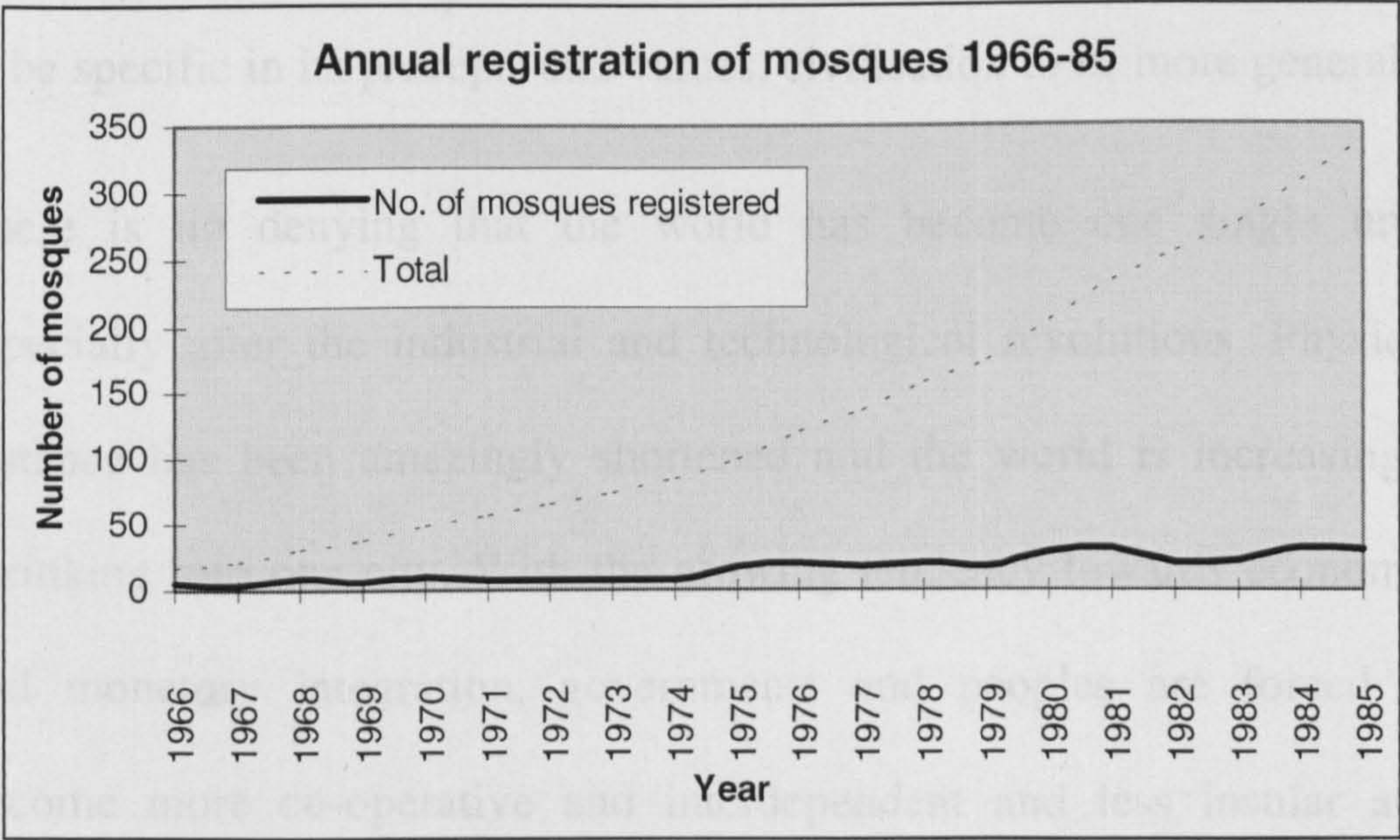


Figure (3). As can be seen from the Graph, there has been a considerable increase in the numbers of Mosques and Islamic Centres over 20 years - a fact which testifies to the increase and spread of religious consciousness, though it is only at an initial stage

3.2- Cultural Pluralism

Culture can be defined as the collective heritage of a nation; it includes its intellectual, social, religious and artistic achievements. It is thus considered the framework which governs the life and distinguishes the identity of a people.²²

The highest and most mature form of culture is called civilisation. Whereas the former may be limited to a particular people, the latter envisages a world view with which all humanity can identify and of which it can become a part. In addition, this study suggests that another main difference between the culture and civilisation is that culture tends to be specific in its precepts and values, civilisation to be more general.

There is no denying that the world has become one single unit, especially after the industrial and technological revolutions. Physical distance has been amazingly shortened and the world is increasingly shrinking into one city. With the growing tendency towards economic and monetary integration, governments and peoples are forced to become more co-operative and interdependent and less insular and parochial. In fact all this has happened within a very short period of

²² Qṭb, *Muḥammad. Hawl al-Tafsīr al-Islāmī li-l-Tārīkh*. Cairo 1989. p. 191

time. Circumstances, therefore, demand greater unity and co-operation, because even though people may have no difficulty in activating and using machines, they do often face challenges in establishing understanding and trust because of the varying strands of thought to which they have been subjected throughout history.

In an interview, *Imām Muḥammad* of Liverpool Mosque highlighted some of the challenges confronting British Muslims. He noted that any truthful and objective assessment of the situation around us would reveal that Muslims around the world are facing difficulty.

Imām Muḥammad's views were also reflected in the results of a recent inquiry carried out in several major United Kingdom cities. Again our study discovered that there was a widespread feeling of dismay on the part of British Muslims with what they perceived as a campaign of Islamophobia waged by the media. These complaints have come mainly from the active propagators of the faith (*Du'āh*) who are aggrieved by the special interest which is often focused on the shortcomings and the faults of weak Muslims. Even though their actions often contradict the teachings of Islam, the media, nevertheless, make a point of portraying

Muslim gamblers, fornicators and alcoholics as good representative of Islam.

There are, quite significantly, other *Du'ah* who do not identify with this claim entirely. Their basic stand on the issue is that certain Muslims have only themselves to blame for the sorry public image that they have earned not only in the British, but even in the international, media as a whole. They explain what is normally presented in the media as being a direct result of the practices and conduct of some Muslims. Hence they argue that were all Muslims to practise their religion according to its letter and spirit, the media would not take such damaging liberties.

One of the most outspoken leaders in the United States, *Imām Ḥamza Yussuf*²³ of California attributed the present dilemma to what are called “Ailing humanity”, where one can have a sickness which is manifested in symptoms that are totally misleading. He cited the example of AIDS, which gives rise to what is called opportunistic infections such as pneumonia, skin diseases, bacterial diseases of the brain, and meningitis. Yet these illnesses in all their different manifestations can be traced to one factor, the breakdown of the immune system. “When we

²³ Lecture, London 1995

look at humanity in a global perspective what we see is a social body that is ailing in the same way that an individual is ailing from AIDS". He further stated that this is how to the collapse of man's relationship with his Lord. When people turn their backs on their Creator, social problems of every kind inevitably arise.

The *Imām* of the Liverpool *Al-Rahma* Mosque²⁴, said "The tyranny that Muslims encountering in this country is not physical torture, as happens in other countries, but the evil that aims through the media, which affects most families, particularly those whose homes have no restrictions on the kinds of programmes the children can watch. There is a danger in this type of family of carelessly losing their Islamic identity"²⁵.

1.3.3- Disadvantages of Settlement in the West

They are notably several disadvantages which affect Muslim immigrants in the West. One of the most striking of these is the free intermixing of the sexes, which is condoned in almost every walk of life, ranging from universities and schools to business places and community centres. From an Islamic point of view, free intercourse between men and

²⁴ Interview, Liverpool 1993.

²⁵ *al-Ashqar, 'ūmar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīah Asīlah*, Kawait 1985.

women is, strictly forbidden. As a result, Muslims should do their best to avoid such influences from Western civilisation. Of course this does not mean that one should adopt a hostile, negative or anti-social attitude. If one were to attend a party or meeting where ladies are present, one should maintain a respectful posture at such gatherings.

The recent migrations to Western countries have a number of characteristics which may be described as a modern form of slavery. Immigrants are thus often called upon to take up jobs which Europeans themselves do not want any more. In some instances they are denied most of their human rights. They are often unable to bring their children and families, and when they do, they are subjected to terrible pressures of assimilation.

The weekly news magazine TIME²⁶ reported an article by Jan Branegan's under the topic "the China summit" saying that "Clinton is regularly vilified by abroad spectrum of critics who charge him selling out American values in the name of trade with china".

In the United States of America a new immigration law has been introduced offering 10,000 visas for permanent residence each year to

²⁶ *Jan Branegan's*, Weekly news magazine, June 29 1988, vol. 151. No. 25.

those who agree to invest at least \$1 million in the United States. After a five-year period, full citizenship will be offered to the investor and his family. The general impression one gets is that the United States policy of accepting refugees is founded more on economic premises than on humanitarian concerns. One political leader in the United States held the introduction of the new law to be a wonderful idea since “The business of America is a business itself”²⁷.

1.3.4- Advantages of Settlement

The decision to settle permanently in the West requires careful consideration; if you are confident that you can live there in conformity with the will of God, and that you can also be useful to Islam, safeguarding your ones own faith as well as that of others, then it is all right.

There are tremendous benefits to be gained from the civil liberties and freedoms available in Western societies. They differ, of course, from one country to another. The United Kingdom, it appears, is the most realistic country in its dealings with Muslims, adopting towards them a flexible policy. Freedom of the press, the expression of one’s views, and

²⁷ *al- Ashqar, ‘ūnar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīah Asīlah*, Kawait 1985.

the right to associate and gather are guaranteed to all people of all religious persuasions, including Muslims.

The standard of living and educational opportunities afforded to Muslims in Western countries are generally better than those available in their own countries of origin. The danger or threat posed to Muslim children, as a result of being taught other religions, may in some circumstances blur or even prejudice their conception of Islam. Both advantages and disadvantages should, therefore, be carefully taken into account.

After a lengthy period of residence in the West the Muslim may acquire, if he so desires, the citizenship of his host country. In this connection it better to be pointed out, though, that under the laws of this country, the passport holder may be obliged to serve in its armed forces. This may conflict with Islamic beliefs, in the event of an out-break of war between the host country and a Muslim country. It may in fact lead to a contravention of the Islamic faith, since a Muslim is not allowed to align himself with non-Muslims to fight against his fellow Muslim.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY AND RECIPROCAL INFLUENCES OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

In the nineteenth century, direct contacts were made with Islam, as a result of the spread of British colonial rule in Asia and Africa, particularly in India. The East India Company employed many sailors for its ships from the Indian sub-continent. As a result, the first house was built in London for their accommodation in 1857. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 played a role in the arrival in the United Kingdom of Somali and Yemeni merchants and business men, especially in Liverpool, Cardiff and South Shields.

It is likely that the first case of conversion to Islam in this country was in 1880 when Mr. William Q. William¹, a lawyer in Liverpool, declared during his visit to Morocco that he had become a Muslim. His visit to that part of the world was the symbol of a religious quest, of a search for true religion. Having changed his name to *Abdullah*, he returned to the United Kingdom and began to spread Islam in Liverpool. He established in it the first Mosque in 1889, wrote many pamphlets about Islam, and

¹ *Nielsen, Jorgen, Muslims in Western Europe*, Edinburgh 1992, p. 5.

he published a weekly magazine called *The Crescent*. Another monthly magazine called *The Islamic World* was also published. In addition to this, he built an institute teaching *Sharī'a* sciences, called the Islamic College².

If we examine the contents of these two magazines from 1894 to 1904, we shall discover that they are full of news about various activities, such as lectures and meetings with high ranking English officials and dignitaries, in connection with the Islamic Faith. Reference is made to the visit to the United Kingdom of Prince *Nāṣir- Allāh Khān*, son of Prince *Abdulrahmān Khān*, the Wālī of Afghanistan. During his stay, he visited the centre mentioned above and donated an amount of money estimated to be £2500 (Two thousand five hundred pounds sterling). There were fluctuations in the growth of the movement initiated by *Shaikh Abdullah*; sometimes it was weak, sometimes strong. But it is certain that the *Shaikh* left Liverpool in 1908 for good. We know nothing of the latter part of his life. What is known about the centre and the Mosque has been gathered only from the records and archives of the Municipal Council and old newspapers.

² *Muḥammad Akram Khan Jema, Shaikh-ul-Islam of the British Isles*, Muslim Wise newspaper, np, 1989.

Another Mosque was built on the pattern of the first Mosque by Yemeni, Indian and Pakistani sailors in Liverpool. It is known as *Al-Rahma* Mosque. This was built during the first half of this century.

Another Mosque was built in Woking, for which a donation was given by an Indian Princess from the city of Bhopal in India. In 1889 she visited the United Kingdom, and this visit prompted her to offer financial assistance.

Since 1869 the United Kingdom has become a multi-racial country, having more than one culture, and comprising one of the largest Muslim communities in Western Europe. This community is full of businessmen, students and tourists who are mostly Arabs. As a result, relations between the United Kingdom and almost all countries of the Islamic world are becoming closer every year.

The activities of the Muslim Community have not been limited to the building of Mosques needed by the Muslims, but have included other spheres of vital interest, such as the following:-

1. Establishing traditional Islamic Schools for teaching the *Sharī'ah* sciences separately, as is the case in India and Pakistan for boys and girls
2. Publishing newspapers and magazines in a number of languages such as English, Arabic and Urdu. The quality of these publications depends on the number of Muslim immigrants in certain areas and on the level of their education, as well as the degree liaison and co-ordination amongst them.
3. Social activity on various occasions, such as marriages, births, visits to sick people, and other local activities involving either visits to relatives or visits to Mosques.
4. Collective prayers on Feast days in public places outside the Mosques, after obtaining permission from the relevant authorities.
5. Establishing special departments concerned with the affairs of the community such as marriage, divorce, births and deaths, which are run by qualified people. The best example is Idārat al-Da'wah wa al-Irshād Office in Goodge Street in London. This office is affiliated to the Department of "Science Research, Ifta, the Call and Guidance" in

Saudi Arabia. A family session is held every Tuesday in London to discuss problems and amiable ways of setting them. Also the Regent's Park Mosque and Islamic Centre in Park Road holds advice and guidance sessions for members of the Muslim community.

It is noteworthy that the British government has always stressed the importance of mutual respect and understanding between the United Kingdom and the Islamic world. Recognition by the West of the importance of Muslim religious and cultural values has always been insisted upon.

It is of great importance that, mutual respect and understanding between the various communities should be encouraged so that friendly relations may be strengthened between them.

The principle of equality of opportunity for all citizens, to which the United Kingdom is committed, has been operative and is applied to people irrespective of their religion, ethnic origin or the colour of their skin. In the Immigration Department, this is clearly mentioned in the posters which explain this policy towards immigrants³.

³ For further details on the United Kingdom's relations with the Islamic religion see the bulletin of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London 1994.

II.1- In Scotland

The first regular Islamic school was established in Scotland in 1962, as seen in Table (1) page 50. This is rather a long time after the date of the earlier immigrants. Immigrants were, in the early days, limited in number, but this number began to increase gradually in the thirties and thereafter. Muslim immigrants began to have jobs in various departments, services, or small businesses, travel agencies, etc.

Table (1). Islamic Centres in Glasgow City and Surrounding Areas

Name of Centre	Year of Establishment	Approx. No. of Students	Day of study per week	Description
Glasgow Central Mosque	1946	300	5	P.D.
Madrasah Taleem Ul Islam	1988	300	5	P.D.
Muslim House	1987	50	weekends	A.Br.
Masjid Paisley Road West	1978	70	5	P.D.
Masjid -e- Noor	1978	150	5	P.D.
Langside Mosque	1979	50	weekends	P.D.
Masjid Alfurqan	1971	40	weekends	P.J.I.
Oakfield Avenue Masjid	1979	40	weekends	P.D.
Masjid Jamia Islamia	1988	60	6	P.B.
Masjid Khizra	1974	30	weekends	P.B.
Islamic Cultural Centre, Holytown	1984	150	7	P.D.
Central Scotland Islamic Centre	1980	40	6, evening	P.D.
Falkirk Islamic Centre	1990	30	6, evening	P.B.
Darul Uloom Sarajia, Bathgate	1994	25	6, evening	P.B.
Kirkcaldy Islamic Centre	1990	35	6, evening	P.Mix.
South West Scotland Islamic Centre		25	6, evening	P.Mix.
P.D.: Pakistani Deobandi A.Br. : Arab Brotherhood P.B.: Pakistani Brilwy P.Mix.: Pakistani Mixture P.J.I. : Pakistani al-Jamā'ah al- Islāmiyyh				

Bashir Mann draws a highly significant picture of the Muslim community, giving us also details which clearly indicate the care and love shown by the people of Scotland for the community. This became apparent after the murder of *Noor Muḥammad* who had only recently immigrated to Glasgow. His funeral was attended by many Scots. There was also adequate coverage of the news everywhere, on 20 May 1925.⁴

In 1942 tradesmen and business men from Yemen and Somalia began to arrive in Cardiff and South Shields. *Shaikh Abdullah al-Hakamy*, who is of Yemeni origin, built the first mosque in Cardiff, giving it the name *Noor al-Islam*. This was then followed by the building of the London mosque known as the *Islamic Cultural Centre*, in 1944, in the time of King George VI. The land of the mosque was donated in return for the donation of the Egyptian government of a plot of land for the building of the Anglican Church in the centre of Cairo. A little before that time, the East London mosque was built, in 1942, which was officially inaugurated on Friday 24 of *Shawāl 1405 Hijra*, corresponding to 12 July 1985.

⁴ See Bashir Mann, *The New Scots: The Story of Asians in Scotland* (John Donald, Edinburgh, 1992), p.119.

We have seen briefly how British interest in Islamic affairs has gradually grown and we have viewed some of the significant milestones for the growth of the Muslim communities in the United Kingdom, since the days of the first Muslim immigrants.

The British government has pursued a well-defined policy towards these communities, ensuring for them equality and dignity.

Any comparison between the mosques built in the past and the mosques built nowadays would leave no doubt as to the amount of freedom, security and safety made available to the Muslims. They have safely depended on the generosity of the United Kingdom.

II.2- Characteristics Traits of the “People of the Book”

With nearly one billion followers each, Islam and Christianity are the major religions that influence the thinking and values of over 40 percent of the world population. Whilst there are rare theological differences, some of which may be significant, there are none the less other important areas of belief that are shared by both communities, for example; belief in *Allāh*, in revelation, in Prophets, in the hereafter and in a divinely inspired moral code organising and regulating human life during our earthly journey to eternity.

History proves that Muslims and Christians used to live together harmoniously only when justice was prominent among them. In addition, they fought as one united body against their enemies. *Muḥammad* (1934) pointed out in “*Al- Islam Wa Al- Ḥazarah Al- ‘Arabīyah*: that “a group of the Christian in *Al- Sham* fight with the Muslims army against their enemy”⁵

God, exalted be his name, has exclusively singled out the good attributes of the Jews and the Christians because they are “People of the Book”. They are followers of scripture to whom Prophets and Messengers have been sent by God, from amongst themselves, to communicate divine messages to them. This has been pointed out in various places in the Holy *Qur’ān*.

It is to be noted that Muslim jurists have made it absolutely clear in their many writings that the People of the Book should be justly and fairly treated. Their rights should be respected in the full sense of the word. Among relevant works which we should mention in this connection is *Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimmah* by *Ibn al-Qayyim*, in which he threw light upon the justice of Islam in its approach to dealing with

⁵ *Ali, M. K.*, “*Al- Islam wa al- Ḥazārah al- ‘Arabiyyah*”, Cairo 1934, p. 285.

Christians and Jews, from the beginning of the mission of the Prophet to the Day of Judgement. This philosophy is based upon justice and protection of the lives, property and rights of the People of the Book. Islamic history shows how this policy has been successfully applied⁶.

1. Relevant to the above is the fact that the Muslims are allowed to eat the same food as the People of the Book. Muslims are also allowed to marry woman who are Christian or Jewish. These things are only allowed in the case of Christians or Jews. God says in the *Qur'ān*:

“Made lawful to you this day are al- Tayyibat, which Allāh has made lawful of the People of the scripture is lawful to you and yours is lawful to them. Lawful to you in marriage are chaste woman from the believers and chaste woman from those who were given the Scripture (Jews and Christians) before your time”

(5:5)

2. The People of the Book are closer to Muslims than others:

The People of the Book are closer to the Muslims than the adherents of *al- Majūs*. ‘Abdullāh b. ‘Abbās, may God be pleased with him, said:

“ the Polytheists wanted the Persians to win the battle against the

⁶ Jews lived under the shade of Islamic justice after they were subjected to much evil and punishment by the Persian ruler Zarudasht in the period around 655 A.D. During the Abbassid rule many Jewish scholars emerged and specialised in various scientific areas; see “*Al-Yahūd fī al-Sharq al-Awsaṭ*”, by Ma’mūn Kīwān 1996.

Christians because they (the Polytheists) were idol-worshippers. The Muslims, by contrast, wanted the Christians to win against the Persians because the former were “People of the Book”.⁷

God says in the Holy *Qur’ān*:

The Romans have been defeated. In the nearer land of Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine, and they, after their defeat, will be victorious. Within three to nine years. The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with Allāh, and on that day, the believers will rejoice (at the victory given by Allāh to the Romans against the Persians).

(30:1-4)

God says in the Holy *Qur’ān*:

“Verily, you will find the strongest among men in enmity to the believers Muslims the Jews and those who are al-Mushrikūn, and you will find the nearest in love to the believers Muslims those who say: “we are Christians”. That is because amongst them are priests and monks, and they are not proud.”

(5:82)

Elsewhere God says that these Christians, whenever they hear the ‘truth’ recited, they are moved to tears, because they know it is the same truth conveyed by Jesus, may God’s peace be upon him,. This is a mark of distinction given to the People of the Book. It is avowed that they will be blessed forever.

⁷ *Ibn. Kathīr, Tafsīr* (vol 3, Interpretation of Sūrat Al-Rūm, p.465.

3. The support and help given by the Christian to the Islamic Faith is worth mentioning in this respect. A historical parallel to this can be found in Islamic history. When a Muslim minority emigrated from Mekka to Abysyinia, the Negus, who was a Christian, gave the Muslims all the support he could. Despite the fact that, like his ancestors, he was a devout Christian, he protected the Muslims who resorted to his country, and did not succumb to the temptations offered to him by the polytheists. He could see that these powerless and peaceful Muslims, who had fled from their enemies, were worthy of protection.

It is related that when the Negus heard the call for Islam as formulated and transmitted by *Jāfar b. Abī Ṭālib*, he wept. He said to the polytheists: “You see: what this man is recounting from the *Qur’ān* and what Jesus has brought to us must both of them have come from one source.”⁸

He ordered that the Muslims be left free to worship God in his territory, and refused to hand them over to the polytheists⁹.

⁸ *al- Mubarakpuri, Safi-ur-Rahman, Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtūm*, Riyadh 1995. P. 103

⁹ *al- Mawdūdī, Abū al-Aḥḥā, Tafhīm al-Qur’ān* , 5/188; np, nd; ibn al- Qaūim, *Zad al-Ma’ād*, 1/24; *Ibn Hishām, Muḥammad, Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, np, nd; *Mubārakfūrī, Safi al-Rahman, “Ar-Rahīq Al-Makhtūm”*, Riyadh 1995

Modern parallels to this, in many ways, can be found in our own time. The United Kingdom has been giving support to needy immigrants from the third world who are now living on British soil. It gives them all possible help and allows them to carry out their Islamic rituals and practices, without any obstacles or difficulties.

4. The Companion *ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ*, may God be pleased with him, described the fundamental characteristics of the Byzantines, which were responsible for their strength and the rapid increase of their population:-

- A. Compassion for the weak;
- B. Patience and restraint when a disaster occurred;
- C. Resumption of effort, after defeat.

Under each of these categories, many good virtues emanating from the Scriptures are to be included and should be furthered and encouraged.

5. Places of worship mentioned in the Holy *Qurʾān* include mosques as well as synagogues, cell, Hermitage. It is further stated that in these places the name of God is frequently mentioned. God has provided

these places of worship which perpetuated the mention of God's name. What is proof is that worship is common to all religions.

God says in the *Qur'ān*:-

“Those who have been expelled from their homes unjustly only because they said: “Our Lord is Allāh” for had it been that Allāh checks one set of people by means of another (monasteries, churches, synagogues, and mosques), wherein the name of Allāh is mentioned much would surely have been pulled down. Verily Allāh will help those who help his (cause). Truly, Allāh is All Strong, All Mighty”.

(22:40)

The Holy *Qur'ān* clearly states the fact that the name of God is often mentioned, in various places of worship like synagogues, cell, hermitage, chapel, and paved.

Conclusion

The Holy *Qur'ān* has praised, as we have seen, the People of the Book, as being aware of the truth revealed by the Prophet, may God's peace and blessings be upon him, stating also that they are not too proud to listen to the truth. Among them are people who are seeking the truth wherever it is.

Add to this fact that there are common features between the Muslims and the People of the Book. Owing to these common features Islam looks upon them as being closer to its teachings than any other people. They follow scriptures revealed by God. The Muslims moreover do not discriminate between any of these messengers; like *Muḥammad*, Jesus Christ and Moses, may *Allāh* bless them all.. The Islamic faith does not differ from the right path defined by those amongst them who have pointed to the truth and the right path.

The fact that relations have over a very long period of time existed between the Muslims and the People of the Book points to the true principle of justice which all the divine scriptures have affirmed.

God has created many peoples, tribes, clans, races, so that they may be acquainted with one another.

II.3- The Orientalists' Concept of Culture On The Orientalist

A number of orientalist's¹⁰ concepts of culture has advanced a comprehensive concept of human culture embracing legal, social and political institutions, the arts, professional skills and religion, as well as various manifestations of intellectual life in the field of literature and philosophy. These manifestations convey a picture of the age and society, and the current events therein taking place.

This all-embracing concept of culture prompted some orientalists to carry out further and deeper research in various fields. This is why they made extensive travels to the Middle East. The process of acquiring knowledge of or from the East was enhanced by a British royal decree which was issued in 1634 asking every ship belonging to the East India Company to bring to the United Kingdom, after every voyage to the ports of the Arab East, at least one Arabic manuscript.¹¹

¹⁰ A term used to denote an institution which enables Western culture to study the East and in fact to affect it culturally, politically, socially, militarily and philosophically. See *Sa'īd, Edward, al- Istishrāq*, 1979, , p. 39. And see *al- Jundī, Anwar, Akhṭā' al-Manhaj al- Gharbī*, Beirut 1982

¹¹ *Hourani, Albert, al- Islām fī al-Fikr al- Gharbī*, London 1994.

As a result of this interest in Arab culture the matter of mutual influence between Oriental and Occidental civilisations acquired increasing importance. This influence began to crystallise gradually, through the universities.

A number of orientalist adopted an objective approach to the acquisition of accurate knowledge in the service of truth; there are many examples. We may mention, in this connection, the German orientalist Zagrīd Hunke (1962), whose work exemplifies the tendency just noted. In her many and diverse works, she deals with the services rendered by the Arabs to human civilisation in general This orientalist has lots of efforts like for example writing many articles in the European press, preparing radio plays and talks for both Arab and German audiences. Her book, "*Shams al- 'Arab Tasṭu' 'la al- Gharb*" is the result of many years of deep research into the problems thrown up for debate.¹²

Another example is the orientalist Adam Mez of Basle University (1940). His writings on Islamic civilisation in the fourth century of the Hijra and its influence on the West are characterised by accuracy and

¹² *Hūnikah, Zaghrīd, Shams al- 'Arab Tasṭu' 'alā al-Gharb*, Arabic trans. Byḍūn, Fārwaq, Beirut 1981. p. 8.

objective research, relying upon many and various sources. His patience and determination, and his command of the field of his specialisation have elicited great admiration from his readers. This author has acquainted himself with various aspects of Islamic civilisation - the natural resources, wealth, population, administration and trade, art, politics and sociology. He has thrown considerable light on many aspects hitherto left obscure by other scholars.¹³

As I have indicated, this shows the awareness of a number of orientalist of the values of Islamic culture and civilisation. Their deep knowledge of its various dimensions has prompted them to convey the results of this research in a spirit of integrity, and honesty as a service to humanity in the search for truth.¹⁴ Hourani has this to say:-

One of the most outstanding pioneers in oriental studies was Joseph Hewitt. A former professor of Arabic at Oxford, his work generated significant interest in the United Kingdom and other European countries. In a series of lectures which he delivered in 1748 he spoke extensively on Islam and the Prophet *Muḥammad*.¹⁵ It has since been

¹³ *Adam Mez*, *al-Haḍarah al-Islāmīyah fī al-Qarn al-Rābī ‘Ashar*, Trans., Abū Ridah, Mūḥammad ‘Abd al-Hādī, Cairo 1957.

¹⁴ *Zaḡzuq, Maḥmūd*, *al-Islām fī Taṣawwūrāt al-Gharb*, Cairo 1987. p. 22.

¹⁵ *Hourani, Albert*, *al-Islām fī al-Fikr al-Gharbī*, London 1994.

recorded in several sources that Hewitt was particularly impressed both with the message of Islam and the personality of the Prophet *Muḥammad*. Interest in and study of Islam and Arabic went back almost a century earlier, to when chairs were founded both at Cambridge, in 1632, and at Oxford, in 1634. The Oxford chair of Arabic was first held by a certain Edward Pococke (1604-1691). Not only did he author a book entitled *Images from Arab History* but he also translated part of the *lḥyā' 'alūm al-Dīn* by Abū Hamīd al-Ghazālī. In like manner another scholar, George Sale, completed the first English translation of the Holy *Qur'ān*, towards the end of the seventeenth century. Thereafter, a number of other distinguished studies relating to Islamic history, literature and philosophy were undertaken in the United Kingdom. These were for the most part conducted through institutes which were specifically established to conduct research in oriental and African studies.¹⁶

The interest and absorption which the orientalist had in Islamic civilisation are reflected in the scores of volumes which have now become essential references for advanced researchers.

¹⁶ *Hourani, Albert, al-Islām fī al-Fikr al-Gharbī*, London 1994. p. 47

This discussion of orientalist works would be incomplete if it failed to note the contribution of early explorers who collated much vital information concerning the topography and archaeology of the Arab lands. Foremost among these pioneering works were Doughty's '*Travels in Arabia Deserta*' and the series written by Musil (1868-1927) on journeys undertaken in the area between Central Asia and the Arabian Peninsula.

II.4- Reciprocal Influence Between East and West

In the period between the twenties and the seventies of this century, there appeared two schools of thought,¹⁷ which have had a clear influence on the East and remain with us to this day, which are:

1-The Traditional Orientalist school.

2-The Modernisation school.

Both schools had their own distinguishing characteristics. The most important one in the first school was its clear aim and motive to study, vigorously, the Orient and all that was related to it, heritage, manners, customs and conventions in order to benefit from the treasures of the Orient. Research in different fields was conducted so that a clear

¹⁷ *Shākir, Maḥmūd, Sukkām al-‘Ālam al-Islāmī*, Beirut 1985, where he mentions some of the influence from the west to the east. And see *al-Jundī, Anwar, "Dirāsah Naqdiyyah li-l-fikr al-Gharbī"*, Kuwait, 1987, where he mentions the mutual influences between the civilisations since the year 571 AH

picture and proper understanding of the Orient could be obtained, especially after the West had discovered the importance of the Middle East as one of the main sources of oil.

The second school (that of modernisation) was distinguished by what it gave to the Arab and Islamic societies from the western way of life to be taken as an example to be followed.

Both schools however were combined in their call for secularism, for the role of religion to be changed and for religion to be diverted of any political role. They cast their shadows on the East by trying to westernise Arab and Islamic society. This was done by trying to alter manners, customs and conventions, giving priority to materialism and making the accumulation of the main goal in life.

Both schools regarded development and progress as adoption of western morality and behaviour. To this end appeals were channelled through universities, schools, and other centres of influence as well as the media. They also described the causes of backwardness, limiting them to traditional thinking directly stemming from Islam.

The Islamic countries followed this call and started to reform their institutions based on this way of thinking. It was adopted at many levels of society, including political and cultural . As a result there have been

many countries which have taken on this thinking and defended it, for example the Turkey of Atatürk, Irān in the reign of *Shāh Reā Pehlevi*, as well as Indonesia under *Aḥmad Suharto* and Egypt under *Jamāl Abdul Nāṣir*.

This influence extended to various liberation movements and some political parties such as the Arab Nationalist Movement, the *Nāṣir* Movement, the *Ba'ath* Socialist Party and the *Fataḥ* Party in Turkey. Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of this European attack on the Orient was the ideological onslaught, which aimed to marginalise the religion. To achieve this, educational curricula were revised and claims of establishing 'women's rights' and liberation from 'slavery' were put forward¹⁸.

The era of colonialism finished in the first half of this century but it succeeded in leaving behind followers in positions of authority. However, almost half a century later their goals have not been realised, and the happiness which they promised has not materialised; rather social, political and economic problems have increased. Most of the

¹⁸ *'Abd al- Hādī, Jamāl and Wafā' Muḥammad, Ta'ṣīl Islāmī li-l-Tārīkh*, al-Manṣūrah 1986, p. 235. Also see *Sahar, Abdullah Yūsef, al- Ra'y al- 'Āmm*, 10821, Kuwait 1997

development plans in the Arab countries have failed and rates of illiteracy and infant mortality have become very high.¹⁹

Although most of these problems and difficulties arose from western influence on the East, the modernisation school believes that this is due to nothing else than residual historical underdevelopment. This must be eliminated to enable capitalist societies to be established.

However this belief was inconsequential, since what had been considered dead and a cause of backwardness and ignorance returned to exert influence in the Islamic countries.

The West started to study these changes in the Islamic world, establishing centres to carry out the necessary research. This was done in order to find out the strength of the new movement and to understand it and its correlation with orthodox Islam. One clear example of this was the request of Prince Charles for the West to study Islam properly and to try to benefit from it.

Hanrid Dakmijiam has a research entitled *Islam in Revolution*. He concentrated this study on the Arab countries. In it he questioned 91 Islamic organisations and parties. He concluded that 64 of them had appeared at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the

¹⁹ For more details see; *al- Jundī, Anwar, al- Madd al- Islāmī fī Maṭla' al- Qarn al- Khāmis 'Ashar*, Cairo 1982.

seventeenth centuries. However, this study was centred around the Arab world only and not the Islamic world as a whole. The Islamic trend is bigger and more apparent than that in the Middle East itself.

Today the Islamic resurgence has become more prominent in eastern societies, and the aspects of society being Islamicised are increasing day by day. Also the greater understanding of Muslims about orthodox Islam is related to this trend, without any of the obstacles which the colonialists raised when desiring to control the Arab nation by promoting nationalism.

The Islamic movement has begun to expand naturally and has realised many achievements in the political and economic domain, as elections have been contested and successes have been registered against secularism.

The Islamic economic system is the only guarantee of achieving equality and comfort in society and the state, owing to its system based on justice, security and kindness to poor.

Also the Islamic movement has succeeded in establishing economic institutions which have achieved relative successes. They are dependent on self-financing and based upon proper Islamic economic guidelines.

Regarding these developments in the Islamic movement and how to react to them, the members of the modernisation school divided into two groups.

The First

The first group has called for the recognition of religion as an essential factor in modernisation, since almost every nation has a private relationship of sorts with a religion. Also, every religion has different effects on its believers and followers, and it is not necessary that religion always be a cause of retardation.

It also said that Islam has its own unique characteristics which distinguishes it from other religions. It is not only a religion for private prayer; it is a religion of state as well. This approach is called the 'critical approach' or sometimes the 'literal approach'.

The main success, especially in the media and political fields, belongs to the proponents of the second group.

The Second

This approach is called the 'Propagandistic Approach'. This group has blamed the failure of modernisation in the Islamic world on the

incompatible nature of Muslims and Islam with Capitalism and Democracy.

In reality the proponents of this approach are more influential in their effect on the media, politicians and educational institutes in the West. They have been able to create a general opinion in the West about Islam through the media.

One clear example Benjamin Barber's article, in *Atlantic Magazine* 1992, entitled "*Jiḥād* vs Mc World", meaning the fight against Globalisation. 'Mc World' here describes the occidental world of technology, large economic projects and other aspects of capitalism.

The word *Jiḥād* according to the authors point of view refers to those Islamic fundamentalists who are trying to carry the Islamic world toward isolation and decline. Islam according to him, is against globalization and as globalization, is seeking the best for humanity, all nations and states must be against any danger that confronts this process.

With this premise, modern orientalist are leading the West towards policies directed against Islam and Muslims. The articles and opinions of Bernard Lewis provide an example of this. He considers the measure

of the development and civilisation of a country as being its closeness or distance from western standards of behaviour. He alleges that Muslims represent a great danger to humanity than Stalin or Hitler, and that this danger will menace Western civilisation. He also warns against Muslims owning nuclear weapons. He stipulates that ownership of these kinds of weapons should not be in the hands of people as ignorant, fanatical and irrational as Muslims.

He praises the Turkish example, which he considers the most suitable model for Arabs and Muslims. It represents a globalized country which has kept religion away from the political arena. But after the recent victory of Islamic *Rafat* Party, he has changed this opinion and, in one of his recent articles, he describes his sadness at the result. It has led him to conclude that democracy and Islam are mutually exclusive.

In another research, entitled *Ikhwān al- Safāh*:²⁰, *Maḥmūd Ismāʿīl* tells us that the beginning of influence between East and West started from that time in the reign of the Abbasid caliphs, and that the thought of the *Ikhwān* included a call for secularism and globalised thinking. However De Bors claims that the source for “*Ikhwān al- Saffāh*” is the belief of

²⁰ *Ismāʿīl, Maḥmūd, Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, Cairo 1996.*

Shī'ah and *Mu'tazilah*, and the results of older philosophy. Netton²¹ reported on the legacy of Crease saying that “as their ideas become better known as a result of the impetus of medical scholarship and the desire for translated texts, they served to influence and inform much of the writing of the intellectuals and philosophers. Among those so influenced were the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’.”

II.5- Islamic communities in the United Kingdom

II.5.1- The Family

“Among His signs is this, that He created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for people who reflect”

(30:21)

“O mankind We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily the most honourable of you in the sight of Allāh is he who is most pious”.

(49:13)

²¹ Netton, I. R., Muslim Neoplatonists, London 1991.

Allāh has created man and woman to play distinct roles in human society²². A woman's biology and physiological nature enables her, at best, to perform a maternal role, necessary in the creation of healthy and happy families. Marriage is a holy contract between man and woman; thus during his farewell pilgrimage the messenger of *Allāh* specifically mentioned the point of how to treat women in Islam.

Ibn Hisham²³, the well known biographer of the Prophet, recalls the occasion:-

The Prophet stood up and delivered the following speech:

“O people, listen to what I say. I do not know whether I will ever meet you at this place again after this current year O people, fear *Allāh* concerning women. Verily you have taken them on the security of *Allāh* and have made their persons lawful unto you by the words of *Allāh* It is incumbent upon them to honour their conjugal rights and, not to commit acts of impropriety, which if they do, you have authority to chastise them, yet not severely. If your wives refrain from impropriety and are faithful to you, clothe and feed them suitably...”.

²² *Khaṭṭāb, J., The Muslim Woman's Handbook*, London 1994, p. 14, For more details about Rights and Duties.

²³ *Ibn Hishām, Muḥammad, Sīrat Ibn Hishām*, np, nd, 2/603.

In the above *Qur'ānic* verses and Ḥadīth, Islam has elucidated and defined the nature of the relationship it enjoins between the husband and the wife. It has outlined the responsibilities to be carried out by each of them, and also stressed the importance of this bond of unity between them, because it is a relationship which may have either a negative or a positive effect upon future generations.

The family in Islam is distinguished by certain characteristics, the most important of which is probably the fact that it is based upon the marital bond which, Islam insists, should be legalised by a marriage contract. This contract is concluded in accordance with the mutual agreement of the parties. Consent is normally given by the husband, and the guardian of the bride should also express his approval and satisfaction. The two parties pledge themselves to start and continue a relationship within the framework of the *Sharī'ah*, as the main basis upon which the structure of the family is based. The *Sharī'ah* provides, in this respect, for the following:-

- (a) Mutual respect between husband and wife.
- (b) Joint responsibility between husband and wife in running the affairs of the family. The main responsibility of the husband is to provide

suitable accommodation, food, clothing and other basic necessities of life. The wife in Islam shoulders the responsibility for bringing up the children and fostering in them the Islamic virtues and ideals from early childhood. They are taught by the mother how to behave properly, to be veracious, to keep their promises, to develop good habits such as cleanliness, respect for others, and such like.

Obedience of the wife to her husband is a duty. This duty is explained by the concept of *Qiwāmah* which can be best understood as a form of Guardianship. The man has the right to *Qiwāmah* for many reasons. The chief of these is that women by nature cannot run their own affairs by themselves. *Allāh* says in the Holy *Qur'ān*:

“Men are the protectors and maintainers of women because God has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means.

Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what God would have them guard”

(4:34)

In this verse, the relationship between husband and wife, particularly in connection with guardianship and obedience, is explained. The concluding part of the verse is significant, as emphasis is placed upon the fact that “The righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in

(the husband's) absence what God would have them guard". Both in the presence and in the absence of the husband, the good wife is obedient. The meaning of the Arabic word *Qānit* is particularly relevant here; it means obedient, and continuing the state or quality of obedience. The good wife guards or preserves what is given to her and keeps in her custody what is given to her for safe-keeping, if her husband is away from her whether on a journey somewhere or for any other reason. Here again, the meaning of the Arabic word *Hāfiẓah* is highly complex as it includes care for, and preservation of not only the husband's material or financial interests, but spiritual welfare or well-being as well; preservation of honour and dignity when the husband is away, and looking after the children in a good Islamic fashion.

God has ordered the Muslims, through the rules and precepts established in the *Sharī'ah*, to act and behave in certain ways in situations which threaten to disrupt life; for example how to restore or mend relations between husband and wife if any dispute arises. It is a fact of life that differences and disputes often occur between a man and his wife for many reasons which have to do with human nature itself. Islam has, therefore, provided several solutions for such problems, and the reason why these solutions have been insisted upon is that Islam

wants the family to be firmly rooted as a pillar of Muslim society, playing its role and fulfilling its vital mission; the final aim is the Islamic upbringing of the children and their integration into the wider Muslim community. These methods are adopted by Muslims in order to realise the ideal society envisaged by Islam.

There are several important factors which make for cohesion of the family in the Muslim community. One of the most important is the bond of faith and belief in God. There are besides other such virtues as help for others, altruism and alms or Zakāt to the poorer members of the community. One theory concerning the etymology of this word Zakāt has a direct bearing upon its significance, not only in the financial or social sense, but also in the spiritual and psychological sense. For it derives from the idea of *Tazkiyah* or purification of the soul; in other words what is meant is that the soul is emptied of the base elements of miserliness, greed and selfishness. Similarly it increases the element of altruism and love for others by doing good to them. The social aspect of

Zakāt has already been dealt with in research on Islamic jurisprudence²⁴, in which we read:-

Definition: Zakāt or alms tax can be defined as that portion of a man's wealth which is designated for the poor. The word is derived from the Arabic root meaning "To increase", "purify", and "bless". It finds its origin in *Allāh's* command

"To take Ṣadaqa from their wealth in order to purify and sanctify them."

(9:103)

The giving of Zakāt is an act which is essentially done for a theological purpose, it helps to foster and develop virtues which make the society a healthy and stable one.

Bringing up the children according to Islamic teachings is something which the Prophet has in particular recommended. The point has been extensively discussed by *Al-Nawawī* in his book *Riyāḍ al- Ṣāliḥīn*²⁵.

²⁴ *Sābiq, Al-Sayyid, Fiqh al-Sunnah*, Eng. Trans. 'Abd al-Majīd Khokhar, Muḥammad Sa'eed Dabas and Jamal al- Din M. Zarabozo, Washington 1986, pp. 1-97.

²⁵ *al- Nawawī, Yaḥya b. Sharaf, Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*, Vol 1, Cairo 1996, pp. 5-53.

“*Ibn ‘Abbās* (R.‘A) relates: Once I was riding behind the Holy Prophet when he said; “Young man, I shall give you some words of advice, be mindful of *Allāh* and *Allāh* will protect you; be mindful of *Allāh* and you will find Him in front of you. If you ask, ask of *Allāh*, if you seek help, seek help from *Allāh*. Know that if the nation were to gather together to benefit you with anything, it would only benefit you with something that *Allāh* had already prescribed for you; and that if it were to gather together to harm you with anything, it would harm you only with something that *Allāh* had already prescribed for you, and when you need help, solicit *Allāh* alone for the same. The pens have been lifted and the pages have dried.” (sci)

In another narration he adds: ‘Be mindful of *Allāh*, and you will find him before you; get to know *Allāh* in prosperity, and He will know you in adversity. Know that what has passed you by was not going to befall you, and that what has befallen you was not going to pass you by. Know that victory comes with patience, relief with affliction, and ease with hardship’.

What this clearly demonstrates is that Islam places a special emphasis upon the early education or upbringing of Muslims. Close connections

were established by the Prophet between belief in God and the daily life of the Muslim. The injunctions and orders given by God should be carried out by the Muslim, from an early age, if the Islamic teachings have been properly inculcated. In the Islamic community, the individual should be taught how to liberate himself from many vices such as infidelity, telling lies and neglect of his duties, In moments of need or distress, the individual who is a good Muslim should first resort to God because He is the source of the good, and he is Omnipotent. Then there is faith in God's power, the belief that God alone has the power to confer upon man what is good and beneficial or the reverse, and it is to Him that the individual should turn for help in all things great or small. In fact all these are recommendations and admonitions given to a young man *Ibn 'Abbās*, who after wards destined to become one of the great '*Ulamā*' well versed in the exegesis of the Holy *Qur'ān*.

An ideal recommended by Islam as being one of the main pillars upon which the stability, strength and role of the family in the Muslim community is based is contentment. Muslims are enjoined to make do with such money as they have and to accept their lot in life. It may be that a family has no means afford luxurious living as regards food,

clothing, accommodation. In this case the wife has to accept the lot of the family ordained by God. This acceptance is necessary, if conflict and disaffection with life, are to be avoided. We must bear in mind that the husband may not be able to provide many of his wife's material needs. His inability to do so may result in conflict and disharmony between them. Islam has made it absolutely clear that not purely material criterion, but criteria of piety and observance of the spiritual teachings of Islam, can be used in settling many of these problems. A poor man, according to the Islamic religion, may be more acceptable to God than a rich man. *Imām Al-Bukharī*²⁶ in the chapter on the virtues of poverty in his the *Ṣaḥīḥ* collection, provides us with details on how men can be judged in this respect:-

The superiority of being poor.

Narrated *Sahl b. Sa'd As-Sa'idi*: A man passed by *Allāh's* Apostle and the Prophet asked a man sitting beside him, "What is your opinion about this (passer by)?" He replied, "This (passer by) is from the noble class of people. By *Allāh*, if he should ask for a lady's hand in marriage, his proposal will be accepted, and if he intercedes for somebody his intercession will be accepted. "*Allāh's* Apostle kept quiet, and then

²⁶ *al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 8, ed Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān, Beirut nd, pp. 304-305.

another man passed by and *Allāh's* Apostle asked the same man (his Companion) again, He said “what is your opinion about this (second) one?”, *Sahl b. Sa'd As-Sa'idi* said: “O *Allāh's* Apostle This person is one of the poor Muslims. If he should ask a lady's hand in marriage, no one will accept his proposal, and if he intercedes for anybody it will not be accepted, and if he talked no one will listen to him” Then *Allāh's* Apostle said: “This (poor man) is better such a large number of the first type (i.e. rich man) as to fill the earth”, (sic).

The gist of the argument, as already indicated, is the criteria by which the Muslim community may be compared or evaluated. Possession of wealth as a traditional criterion, which had been adopted before Islam, is rejected as being insufficient and incapable of meeting the basic needs of human nature. Obedience to God is all-important and is fully in conflict with the teachings and doctrines of “worshippers of the Dirham and the Dinar”. In the Muslim community, people should be guided by the ideal of simplicity and austerity, i.e. contentment with the lot ordained or decreed by God.

There is a Ḥadīth which says; “For a pious servant or worshipper of God, what is ordained, even though it may be a pittance (*Rizq kafāf*) to live on, will be satisfactory.” Now, the Arabic expression inserted here

is very significant in this context. The word *Kafāf* derives from the root *k-f-f*, and *kaff* means “The palm of the hand;” *Kafāf* indicates “paucity”, or small amount of money or food on which one subsists. This kind of subsistence, *Rizq kafāf* is a test from God of whether one patiently accepts one’s lot or not. In his *Ṣaḥīḥ*, *Imām Al-Bukhārī* includes the following Ḥadīth²⁷ in order to drive home the idea that the early Companions willingly accepted what was allotted to them by God. This acceptance and satisfaction with one’s lot or portion in life was for them not only something theoretical, but also something practical, and a concrete example illustrating how the early ardent and staunch believers in Islam indicated the right path to be followed by subsequent generations. Their care for the Hereafter was all-important. The Ḥadīth runs as follows:

Narrated Abu Wail: We paid a visit to *Khabbab* who was sick, and he said: “We migrated with the Prophet for *Allāh*’s sake and our reward became due on *Allāh*. Some of us died without having receive anything of the wages, and one of them was *Mus’ab b. ‘Umair* who was martyred on the day of the battle of *Uḥud*, leaving only sheet to shroud him in, if

²⁷ *al- Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ*, Vol. 8, ed Muḥammed Muḥsin Khān, Beirut. nd, p.306.

we covered his head with it, his feet became uncovered, and if we covered his feet with it, his head became uncovered. So the Prophet ordered us to cover his head with it and put some Idhkhir over his feet. On the other hand, some of us have had the fruits (of their good deed) and are plucking them in this world.”,²⁸ (sic).

If however, acceptance of one’s lot is desirable and necessary, this does not mean that man should renounce or abandon the concept of work, labour and livelihood (*Kasb*), for it is the duty of the Muslim not to neglect his duty or work. There are many verses in the *Qur’ān* stating that the right balance should be struck between the claims of work and the religious duty of worship. One such verse compares and conjoins this world and the Hereafter.

“But seek, with the wealth which Allah has bestowed upon you, the Home of the Hereafter, nor forget your portion of legal enjoyment in this world”

(28:77)

Indeed it is highly significant that, for the Muslim, the meaning of life is closely bound up with the endeavour to make the world better: “To

²⁸ *al- Mubarakpuri, Safi-ur-Rahman, Ar-Raheeq al-Makhtūm*, Riyadh 1995. p. 284.

develop the earth and make it prosperous”. The *Qur’ān* further says:
“Behold, God said to the angels

“When your Lord said to the angels: ‘Verily, I am going to place generations after generations on earth’ They said: ‘Will you place therein one who will make mischief and shed blood while we glorify you with praises and thank you.’ He said: ‘I know what you do not know’...”

(2: 30)

In attempting to understand the last quoted verse, we should pay special attention to the Islamic concept of man as the vicegerent of God on earth. This is a concept that distinguishes man from any other creature created by God. In this connection man is enjoined to “develop the earth”, and to look after the affairs and various aspects of his mundane existence. Belief in God comes first among the priorities governing the life of the Muslim. Then, in the record place, comes the role of man as a vicegerent. Then two concepts combine to shed light upon the vast design of the universe which is subject to the rule and power of God. What this means, of course, is that Islam caters for both the material and spiritual needs of man; it fosters the unity of these needs and their interaction and integration within the hierarchy just mentioned. This tendency to meet both the material and the religious needs of humanity

is called in Arabic the *Fiṭrah*, a word which is difficult to translate, due to its many connotations, but which may be translated as “the basic and natural disposition of human nature”.

The concept of freedom in Islam: The advent of Islam in the seventh century was a significant turning-point in world history. It introduced a new outlook upon life and human liberty and led to the rectification of many erroneous view on freedom which had been commonly accepted until then. Many of these views had, in fact, brought about extensive human suffering and misery in the past. These mistaken and often exaggerated views were based upon attempts either to prove that the spirit had priority over matter, or vice versa.

What Islam seeks to do is to liberate the individual from these delusions so that he may proceed along a moderate path without going to either extreme. It is in this specific context that Islam calls for a rectification of the concept of freedom which has itself been distorted by many false philosophies, such as; the end justifies the means,. These philosophies sought to guarantee prosperity and happiness for their adherents, but they misconstrued the real objectives of human life. In Islam, we find a true picture of human behaviour which shuns the extremes of

spiritualisation and materialism alike. An example of such behaviour is also provided by members of the Muslim family. Islam provides us with the ideal behaviour of man in an ideal society which is based upon moderation. It has defined the powers and responsibilities of each member of the family and its collective role in the community. In the family, the wife is obliged to obey her husband because he is responsible to God for her well-being and happiness. This obedience, however, is not absolute at all times and in all situations. For if the husband wants to affect his wife's Islamic beliefs negatively, she should not obey him. There is a Ḥadīth which has a direct bearing upon this point, and which categorically affirms that the primary consideration is obedience to God: *"There is no obedience to any person in disobeying God"*.²⁹

This Ḥadīth has a more general application, and is not limited to the man-wife relationship. When anyone orders or induces us to disobey God in any way, we should not obey that person whether he is a father, husband, uncle. Another Ḥadīth states that "Obedience is applicable only to that which is fitting and good". Disobedience to God should be

²⁹ *al-Bukhārī and Muslim*, Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr, Kuwait nd, p. 566.

rejected and resisted even if urged by the ruler, the husband, or the chieftain.

Man's freedom is secure in Islam, but such freedom does not mean encroachment upon the rights of other people. A man has no right to inflict harm on his neighbour in the name of freedom by invoking the theory that he is free "to do whatever he likes". Similarly, the wife cannot , in the name of freedom, do whatever she likes with her husband's property or money without his permission. Freedom of expressing one's views and opinions is also secure in Islam. Islam guarantees such freedom for every member of the family, as well as for other people in the community. The reason is that there is no monopoly of opinion limited to an elite in Islam. However, such freedom should not be misapplied to attack sanctities established by or connected with the Islamic religion.

In the house of her husband or father, the Muslim woman has no right to leave home at any time or in any manner she wants. Islam has restricted woman's freedom through her husband in his capacity as her protector. She should not therefore leave the house at any time without a reason sanctioned by the *Sharī'ah*. Similarly, the woman cannot wear anything

she wants, because the *Sharī'ah* has outlined the characteristics and features of women's clothes.

Having reviewed the main principles of decorum and the deportment of the Muslim family, we shall now consider to what extent the guidelines mentioned above have been implemented by Muslim families in the United Kingdom. In order to understand the nature of the difficulties encountered in our research, we have to consider the main characteristics of the Muslim family in the United Kingdom, the extent to which it has been affected as a result of residence and of naturalisation in this country as well as the extent to which families adhere to the *Sharī'ah*.

II.5.2- Typical Features of the Muslim Family in The United Kingdom

Mutual respect between a Muslim and his wife is not a characteristic exclusively limited to the Muslim family to the exclusion of other religions; such relationships based upon mutual respect and love exist in other religions. The same is true with regard to social care and welfare, which are also highly valued in all religions. As far as Muslim families are concerned, only a limited percentage of their total number apply the teachings of Islam on sound upbringing and education. The

overwhelming majority leave such questions to the schools to which their children belong, and which are normally based upon Western cultural values and curricula that are often inappropriate and alien to Islam. The result is that Muslim families in the United Kingdom have, to a large extent, neglected the Islamic requirement for education. There is consequently every likelihood that the sons and daughters of these families will probably adopt a new culture alien to that of their ancestors.

With regard to the wife's obedience to her husband, it can be concluded with virtual certainty that this Islamic ideal has been neglected by the majority of Muslim families. The husband's orders and injunctions concerning what should and should not be done are by and large ignored by the wife. There are several reasons why the teachings of Islam have been neglected by Muslim families in the United Kingdom. Foremost among these is the concept of freedom held by people in the United Kingdom. It is an outlook to which people who have been brought up in Islam cannot, from a doctrinal point of view, subscribe. This concept of freedom, for example, gives the husband sexual licence. Similarly the wife can have sexual intercourse with other men. Westernised Muslims do not object to such indecent behaviour. By virtue of the power given

by this concept of freedom, the husband cannot oblige his wife to dress or behave in accordance with the teachings of Islam. What he normally does is that he leaves her alone, because this is her supposed freedom.

The implications of this permissive concept of freedom has been disastrous for the Muslim family in the United Kingdom. Thus children are left to do whatever they want, to indulge in patterns of behaviour which are by no means compatible with the Islamic doctrine. Young men and women mix together in sport and social clubs, swimming pools and suchlike, and thus cannot resist temptation. All these practices are forbidden in Islam.

The methods legislated by Islam for removing any discord and improving worsening relations between husband and wife are no longer useful in most Western societies. For more often than not, wives are given extra powers over their husbands. Moreover, in many cases girls who are sixteen years old may bring their boy-friends to parents' house in order to have sexual intercourse with him. However, the parents as the owner of the house have the right to allow or refuse entry to any one who comes to their house. The pretext is that she is free to do whatever

she wants as a grown-up. The result, therefore, is that the man, in the sphere of his family, can not control his wife nor his own daughters.

No interest is shown by the Muslim in the United Kingdom is wearing his distinctive modest clothes. On the contrary, European dress codes have replaced the Islamic standard. The craze for fashionable dress and the demand for the latest styles, by both men and women, are well-known. Muslim women in the United Kingdom are not seen wearing proper Muslim dress which is characterised by modesty and conformity to traditional morals. Muslim men do not observe traditional norms either, when it comes to dress. Indeed, it has been widely known that they demur at wearing any Muslim dress as being reactionary and 'behind the times'. This has been a serious deviation from what the *Sharī'ah* has instructed Muslims to do since the appearance of Islam: to be modest in dress.

The family is no longer content with its portion in this life from the financial point of view. All members of the family the father, the children and the wife are all working to get more money. Money-making is the leading maxim, even if it is done by gaming, gambling or

usury. All the Islamic ideals directly opposed to those tendencies have been forgotten.

The Muslim family in the United Kingdom has been so greatly influenced by, or subjected to, such enormous influences from Western culture that its life has lost any religious significance or meaning. The Islamic ideals have been forgotten or neglected in such areas as daily behaviour, worship, dress, This is a new generation which has torn itself apart and totally abandoned its original culture, its legacy, its traditions, in response to the demands of a new life which has nothing to do with its roots and its religion. The question of religious values, established by Islam, is now being discarded and replaced by other cultures which are enslaving and crippling the Muslims in the United Kingdom.

II.6- Factors Affecting the *da'wah* in the United Kingdom

There are two great sources of influence which affect the process of Islamic *da'wah* in every age and in every society. These are the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*. While the former is the divinely revealed word of God The Almighty, the latter is a practical demonstration and expression of all that the former entails. Hence when *Ā'ishah*, the wife of the Prophet

Muḥammad, was asked about the character of her husband she replied: “His character was the *Qur’ān*”.³⁰

In any attempt to assess the *da‘wah* in the west, it is important this should be preceded by an understanding of its meaning and objectives. For this, more often than not, provides the basic guidelines by which to measure the degree of success or failure of the various Islamic centres and organisations that are involved in this activity. Indeed, it further enables us to identify the specific objectives that have been achieved and those that have not.

In spite of the apparent progress and growing popularity of the Islamic movement in the west, there still remains a number of areas where actual development has not been achieved. One such area is the scarcity of qualified and committed workers for the Islamic call. As a consequence, it is extremely common to find in western societies individuals who pretend to be scholars and often act to the detriment of the Islamic *da‘wah*. This reality is a poignant reflection of the inadequacies and failures of the educational programmes set-up by the various Islamic institutes, centres, schools and mosques.

³⁰ *Ibn Kathīr*, Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm. vol. 4, Kuwait nd, p. 425.

Spontaneity and lack of proper planning is yet another factor which has drastically impeded the progress of Islamic work throughout the west. Surely a careful adherence to the *Qur'ānic* principles of *da'wah* would have prevented the negative and traumatic consequences so very often associated with ill conceived and emotional decisions. The Prophet *Muhammad* and his followers were enjoined to approach their task with clarity, understanding and acumen.

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is better. Truly, your Lord knows best who has gone astray from his path, and he is best aware of those who are guided.”

(16:125)

In order to avoid the pitfalls and dangers of blind prejudice and bigotry, God Almighty ordered His Prophet and all those who followed him to for the way of the Lord:

Call (men) to the way of your Lord

(16:125)

This basic directive is very often overlooked by the workers in this field; hence they call for support of their own organisations, institutions, and leaders. The problem is then further compounded when they do so

irrationally by demanding from others practices which are beyond their capacity. Newly converted women or brides may, therefore, be ordered to wear the face veil even though they have not been or informed about the virtues of chastity in Islam. And when they express their unwillingness or inability to do so they are rebuked and condemned for 'weak faith'.

On another level, many young and enthusiastic callers to Islam engage in *da'wah* as if it were an intellectual debate to prove who is more versed in theology. Hence their sole objective is to defeat and belittle those whom they are calling to Islam. Of course, the entire purpose of the *da'wah* is to deliver the message of truth, explain its principles and guide mankind toward them. In this light, therefore, it is always necessary that those who are being invited to Islam should feel a sense of belonging and care rather than defeat and humiliation. This principle of *da'wah* was brilliantly displayed by the Prophet *Muhammad* when a certain desert Arab urinated in his mosque in *Madinah*. Indeed the man was not yet finished before a group of companions pounced on him and were about to beat him. The Prophet intervened and told his companions to allow the man to finish relieving himself; after he had finished, the Prophet *Muhammad* then explained to him the Islamic concept of

cleanliness and the reasons why mosques should be revered and kept clean. The compassion and wisdom demonstrated by the Prophet on this occasion was, undoubtedly, a decisive factor which prompted this desert Bedouin to declare his acceptance of Islam.

Hastiness and impatience has been a long-standing obstacle on the path of *da'wah* in the west. Islamic workers in these parts have very often displayed an insatiable appetite for quick results. They have, as it were, shown a willingness to pick the fruits long before they were ripe. Similarly their lack of patience has led to feelings of frustration, despair and disappointment. Again the Noble *Qur'ān* has provided the guidelines on how to address these issues of hardship and slow results. It declares;

“And endure you patiently, your patience is not but from Allāh. And grieve not over them, and be not distressed because of what they plot.

Truly, Allāh is with those who fear him, keep their duty unto him, and those who are Muḥsin ūn.”

(16: 127-8)

The issues of guidance and error are both in the hands of God. He knows those who will accept his message and those who will not. Hence He advises the callers to Islam not to worry after having fulfilled their

basic duty of delivering the message. For once they have done their part they must then await its outcome from *Allāh*. The unwillingness of people to come to Islam and the apparent weakness of the Islamic movement often produces feelings of sadness in the hearts of the callers. The *Qur'ān* urges them not to lose faith but instead to remember that 'God is with those who restrain themselves and those who do good.' These are certainly words of comfort and reassurance; for whoever is blessed with the support of God will eventually emerge triumphant. In the final analysis the attitude and conduct of those who call to Islam can be summarised in the following verse;

Say (O Muḥammad) verily my prayer, my sacrifice, my sacrifice, my live and my dying are for Allāh, the Lord of the 'Ālamīn He has no partner. And of this I have been commanded, and I am the first of the Muslims.

(6: 162-3)

This verse confirms that the Islamic *da'wah* and its propagation is itself an act of worship which has its own conditions and rules. Any failure to fulfil these prerequisites will inevitably lead to failure and rejection by God. Surely one can not ignore the fact that the purpose of the Islamic *da'wah* is to ensure that the divine faith may play a more practical and

effective role in reforming human societies, relationships, attitudes and practices.

II.7- The Principles of *da'wah*

It is the main duty of all Islamic centres to begin with:-

The teaching of belief in the oneness of *Allāh*. The first priority which Muslims in the West must safeguard is *Tawḥīd* which means:

- (a) To believe with honesty that there is only one Lord for all the universe.
- (b) To believe with honesty that none has the right to be worshipped but *Allāh*.
- (c) To believe that we must not name or qualify *Allāh* except with what He or His Messenger has named or qualified Him, and believe in this without twist the meaning.

The second priority³¹ is to understand the reality of the meaning of the first fundamental principle of Islam:-

“*Lā ilāha illā Allāh Muḥammad-un-Rasūl Allāh*” . None has the right to be worshipped but *Allāh*, and *Muḥammad* is the Messenger of *Allāh*.

³¹ For more details, see: *Zaydān , 'Abd al-Karīm, Uṣūl al- Da'wah*, Baghdad 1992, p. 5.

Thus, belief in *Allāh* is the central pillar upon which the life of every Muslim is built. It represents the axis around which his life, hopes and dreams revolve. Muslims should always try to make every effort and sacrifice to preserve and fulfil the demands of their faith. In fact all the Prophets preached *Tawḥīd* as the *Qur'ān* confirms :-

And we did not send any Messenger before you O Muḥammad but we inspired him (saying) La ilaha ill Allāh. (None has the right to be worshipped but I (Allāh), so worship Me (alone and none else).
(21:25)

Our Prophet, *Muḥammad* is the last Messenger sent by *Allāh* to teach the goal of worshipping *Allāh* alone. He was sent to call upon humanity to do what they are created for: worshipping *Allāh* alone, taking no partners with him in worship.

II.7.1- Learning the Arabic Language

Muslims in the west have a double duty toward the Arabic language for many reasons. The main reason is that Islam can only be fully understood if one masters the Arabic language. The second reason emanates from the fact that translations into other languages however good they may be, cannot capture the full meaning of the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. Thus Muslim youth stands to benefit tremendously if the

key to understanding Islam (Arabic) is given to them. They will thus know Islamic laws and become useful members of the *Ummah*. If Arabic is not learned, there will always be a barrier between the individual and a proper understanding of Islam. Furthermore, if one has a good Islamic education, it is very likely that his entire lifestyle will be influenced by Islamic values. Likewise if one's language is English then it will be formed according to English culture and tradition.

The experience of Arab immigrants in South America illustrates in no uncertain terms some of the problems and set-backs that may occur when a minority community loses contact with its language and culture. The Muslim emigrants in to Latin American were taught Spanish and Portuguese. Because of negligence their children became ignorant of their ancestors' language, culture and history. This is in contrast with emigrants from other countries who forced their children to speak their language first, and in their own schools. After that, they allowed them to speak the language of their adopted countries. Arabs did the opposite. Their children barely spoke any Arabic, and if they did, they spoke it very poorly. This observation takes us to the second priority of Muslims in the west.³²

³² For further reading, see: *Majalat al- Būḥūth al- Islāmīyah*, vol. 22, Riyadh 1992, p. 246.

II.7.2- Establishing Islamic Schools

Muslim children must be provided with proper Islamic schools. This need is more particularly felt in the first years of education which are of vital importance. During these formative years children learn the principles of behaviour, religion and tradition. It is clear that the nature of the Muslim *Ummah* in Europe depends entirely upon the type and quality of education young Muslims receive. From all indications, it appears that there is a consensus among European governments to withhold special funding for Muslim schools. Indeed, in many situations official policies have betrayed a low level of tolerance toward Islamic dress. In the face of such difficulties it is imperative that Muslim organisations should depend on themselves in order to establish the required educational institutions.

Today's schools of the west do not produce other than materialistic, secular youth, who are taught to make sacrifices for monetary and material gain, in order to indulge in the joys of this life. They do not permit the remembrance or commands of God to rule their lives. To direct Muslim children into such an environment will certainly be counter-productive from an Islamic perspective. Many of those who were themselves taught in western schools realise the danger of sending

Muslim children to such schools. They have, consequently, written extensive reports and essays calling upon Muslims to establish Islamic schools, especially at the pre-primary and primary levels.

II.7.3- Protecting Muslim Minorities

Muslim minorities have always faced one of two dangers:-

(a) Losing their Muslim identity.

(b) Elimination.

In the first instance, losing Muslim identity usually occurs after Islamic beliefs and traditions have become corrupted or subject to distortion. Under communism for example, Muslims were forced to change their religion and native language and were even prevented from marking the graves of Muslims.

Second, the difficulties of Muslims in the west has occurred where they have become the victims of hatred and frustration in the Christian world. The plight of the Muslim Turks in Germany is a good example of the type of physical abuse that can occur in the west. Very often they are attacked on the streets or their homes are fire-bombed. One can also highlight the toughening of immigration laws in France. The ethnic

cleansing and massacre of Muslims in Bosnia is a bloody example of the response to the call raised by racism, and accepted the world over, that Islam posed a veritable threat to international peace. The propagators of this call claim that after the fall of communism Islam has become the new danger to all humanity.

Muslim minorities in the west need urgent help to preserve their identity, religion and their very existence. To achieve this, they need to remember that the following are necessary

1. The affirmation of the basic belief that Muslims “pest community presented to humanity”. The affirmation of the correct Islamic beliefs that will make Muslims feel proud of their religion and feel the sweetness of *Īmān* in their hearts.
2. The learning of Arabic by all Muslims. They should learn Arabic during childhood and give it its due place in their religion. The preservation of Arabic is as necessary as the preservation of Islam itself.
3. The performing of *da‘wah* need by Muslims wherever they may be.
4. The demonstration of unity by Muslims in any matter related to their faith

5. The precision of Muslims education from priority in the primary to secondary levels.
6. The establishing of committees composed of Muslim scholars that will teach the religion to Muslim immigrants and solve their problems according to the *Qur'ān* and the Sunnah.
7. The establishing of a sound economic system that will benefit Muslim immigrants in the west. This economic system will provide a degree of financial independence for all Muslims³³.

II.8- Means of Application

This study proposes several points which are vitally important. They should be suggested to the various Islamic centres, which should in turn examine and implement them according to their own resources and abilities.

³³ Many contemporary experts on economics have stated that there is an increasing growth of Islamic investment institutions. The manager of City bank in Bahrain declared: "I expect a 10-15% increase per year of the involvement of Islamically based transactions". Additionally, many banks have now opened specific departments to deal with Islamic banking like, the United Bank of Kuwait in London and The Dutch Bank in Germany likewise, the international oil company; Shell, has invested in a gigantic Islamic project in Malaysia according to Islamic rules. See: the newspaper al- Anbā' Issue 7583, Sunday 29 June 1997.

II.8.1- Planning

Planning is considered the scale by which we measured, success and failure, and determine future goals and objectives. In some ways one shapes the future of things by planning them. Of course by not planning them one also shapes their future. The difference is, however, if you plan for something, you will take the necessary steps to ensure that with the help of *Allāh* the matter you wish to implement will proceed in the right direction. If one does not plan for something, he will not take such steps and hence it may develop in a way which was not intended. *‘Ā’ishah* (RA) reported that the Messenger of *Allāh* said:

‘The deeds most loved by Allāh are those done regularly, even if they are small.’

This tradition demonstrates the importance of continuity of effort even if it is small. Not only is this effort loved by *Allāh* but moreover one will gain the reward and finally attain the desired aims. Accordingly the Prophetic traditions give us ample advice on the importance of planning. Indeed his migration or *Hijrah* is very instructive in this respect. For not

only does planning help in strengthening power but it also helps in the final attainment and realisation of objectives.³⁴

Al-Mubārakfūrī recalls the role of planning and organisation in the Prophet's migration. He notes³⁵ that when the angel *Jibrā'īl* was sent down to the Prophet, he fixed for him the time of migration and asked him not to sleep that night in his usual bed. At noon, the Prophet went to see his companion *Abū Bakr* and arranged with him everything for the intended migration. It was *Ṣafar* 27th, the thirteenth year of the Prophethood, i.e September 622 A.D. Thus Almighty *Allāh* reminded His Prophet:-

And remember when the disbelievers plotted against you to imprison you, or to kill you, or to drive you out from your home they were plotting, and Allāh too was planning, and Allāh is the best of planners

(8:30)

Faced with the threat of death, the Prophet *Muḥammad* decided to mislead his enemies. Instead of taking the usual northern road out of

³⁴ Another example of planing is the first *ʿAqabah* Pledge where after the pledge the prophet sent to the city of *Yathrib* *Musʿab b. ʿUmair al-ʿAbdari* the first Muslim ambassador to teach the people there the doctrines of Islam, give them practical guidance and make attempts at propagating the Islam among those who still professed polytheism.

³⁵ *Al-Raḥīq Al-Makhtūm*, pp. 168-171.

Makkah to *Madinah*, as the polytheists had expected, he walked along the road south. of *Makkah* leading to *Yaman* until he reached a cave and stayed there for three nights. Meanwhile, *Abdullah*, the son of *Abū Bakr* would visit them after dusk to bring them up to date on the situation in *Makkah*. On her part, *Asmā'*, the daughter of *Abū Bakr* brought food for them which she concealed in a bundle on her waistband.

Finally, *Abdullah b. Urayqit* their guide led them along the unfrequented coastal route in order to reach their target safely and quickly. Thus, if any group or community of Muslims are to gain similar help and support from their Lord, they must organise their efforts and plan effectively.

The main aims of all Muslim organisations in the United Kingdom are centred around the following objectives.

- (a) To strengthen the sense of dignity and unity among Muslims.
- (b) To increase the correct knowledge and proper understanding of Islam as a world religion.
- (c) To enlighten the world with the wisdom of Islam, using all suitable and modern means of communication.

- (d) To support Muslim organisations around the world and assist in co-ordinating Islamic activities and events among them.

Once they have determined the goals and time needed to achieve them, they should then embark upon a planning process based on mutual consultation, as enjoined by the Holy *Qur'ān*. *Allāh* says:

And those who answer the call of their Lord, and offer their prayers perfectly and who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation.

(42:38)

After adopting all the foregoing measures, they may then proceed with full confidence and trust in support from their Lord.

II.8.2- Communication

Communication is another essential factor in the success of joint efforts. Notwithstanding the importance of radio, television and newspapers, one cannot discount the value of personal communication. The Prophet *Muḥammad* emphasised on numerous occasions some of the basic obligation in to Muslim one into another, such as:

- (a) If you meet a Muslim say *Al-Salām 'alaykum*, which means peace from God upon you.

- (b) If he is sick, visit him.
- (c) Answer his invitation if he invites you.
- (d) Attend his funeral when he dies.

In addition Muslims should be kind, warm-hearted and good-natured in this life. In the communication process, we normally need a sender, a receiver, a message and a feedback. The Prophet himself very often repeated his statements three times in order to ensure that he was being fully and correctly understood³⁶. Be that as it may, good communication in all circumstances requires the ability to pass information to those who need to know and to ensure that the information is not only received but also well understood.

During his time the Prophet *Muḥammad* employed all forms of communication to propagate his message. These included oratory, letters, meetings, emissaries and even going personally to attend gatherings. Today technology has introduced many instruments which have rendered the process of communication much easier and affective. Contemporary Muslims therefore endeavour to exploit all these methods to their advantage.

³⁶ *al- Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ al- Bukhārī*, Vol. 1, ed. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān, Beirut nd, pp.94-96.

II.8.3- Human Resources

Human Resources also constitute another vital prerequisite for the success of the Islamic *da'wah*. For whatever our desired goal may be, it cannot be achieved only on the basis of its plan, even if it is an extraordinarily good plan.

With regard to the available human resources it must be emphasised that the talents and abilities of individuals should be utilised in the right manner. In the delegation of duties and responsibilities special care must be taken to place the right persons in the right place. Thus it is necessary to assess the requirements of the particular job before deciding who needs to be chosen for the task. For example, do we need a man with knowledge - a scholar - or do we need a man who will be able to guide people and direct them, or do we need a man with creative ideas? After we have defined the man and the job, then we can put the right person in the right place.

Apart from planning, communication and the correct use of human resources, it is also important that those who invite men to the way of Islam should know the *da'wah* of the Prophet and how he started it. He started his *da'wah* on an individual and secretive level, especially to his

closest kin. He invited his uncles and cousins to his home. *Al-Mubārakfūrī* has this to say about this story. “He then stood up and delivered a short speech explaining in what he believed ... he said:

“I swear by Allāh, there is no god but Him, and that I am a Messenger sent to you in particular, and to the rest of people in general.”(sic)³⁷

The Prophet naturally initiated his divine mission from his home and then moved to the people closely associated with him; this is in itself proof that all Muslims should start with their homes in order to convince them about the religion, then after that they may proceed to invite the wider public, depending on their closeness. In his time, the Prophet tried to find people who were willing to contribute to his plan and to develop similar interest among those who were not only willing but capable of contributing to the Islamic cause. As a result of such moves, many notable individuals from among his people immediately responded and quite readily embraced the true faith. They are known in the Islamic literature as the early converts they are:

First of all, *Khadījah*, the Prophet's spouse, the Mother of the believers, followed by her freed slave *Zayd b. Ḥārithah*, his cousin *‘Ali b. Abī Ṭalib*, his intimate friend *Abū Bakr Al-Ṣiddiq*, who from the first day he

³⁷ *Ar- Raḥīq Al- Makhtūm*, p. 82

embraced Islam, proved to be an energetic and most zealous activist. He was wealthy, obliging, mild and upright. He invited whoever he had confidence in to Islam. Through his personal efforts, a good number of people were converted to Islam, such as *ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān*, *Al-Zubāyr b. al-ʿAwām*, *ʿAbd al-Reḥmān b. ʿAwf*, *Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ*, *Ṭalhah b. ʿUbayd Allāh*. These individuals constituted the eight forerunners, and more especially the vanguard of the new faith in the Arabian Peninsula. Lastly, it is also important to realise that one only very rarely encounters such outstanding and gifted persons. In fact it may take months and even years to prepare people to attain the levels of excellence witnessed in the early forerunners of Islam. Certainly the propagation of Islam requires a special type of spiritual and intellectual training in addition to the development of individual skills and aptitude. While people without plans will not suffice, so too there is no chance for plans without people who will succeed.

Although it has been established that all three issues mentioned above are very important, it is clear that none of them alone is a sufficient means to achieve our objective. Yet when applied together, they will establish a sound basis from where we can start confidently. Of course we are well aware that it is *Allāh* who is All-Wise, All-Mighty. It is He

alone who grants success. This knowledge, nevertheless, does not absolve us from fulfilling our responsibilities.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please indicate as to the type of organisation: Institute,
(Dar-ul-Uloom), Islamic School, Islamic Centre, Islamic Study
Circle, Muslim Women's Society, Other. Please state .

2. When was the organisation established:

Before 1900

Between 1901 and 1950

Between 1951 and 1960

Between 1961 and 1990

After 1990

3. Please indicate as to the success of your Islamic *da'wah*
activities:

Excellent, better than expected

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

4. What is the future of Islamic *da'wah* activities in the United
Kingdom?

Good

Satisfactory

Poor

Comments

5. Are there any new plans or activities that you intend to introduce for Islamic *da'wah* in the United Kingdom ?

6. What are the main problems that you encounter in your *da'wah* activities?

7. Do immigrants of Muslims to the United Kingdom benefit the *da'wah* activities?

8. Are you linked or associated with any other Islamic organisation, and how?

Educational & Cultural

Social

Material

Other, please state.

9. How can the Islamic *da'wah* be increased to counter in correct ways of life with *Tazkiyah*?
10. What is the role of the media in the Islamic *da'wah* in the United Kingdom?

II.9- The Field Survey

In five hundred questionnaires distributed throughout Manchester, Bradford, Birmingham, London and Glasgow, to various types of Islamic institutions such as mosques, schools, Islamic centres and others, the response was 300 which were carefully analysed and presented in the form of four Figures labelled Figures A, B, C and D.

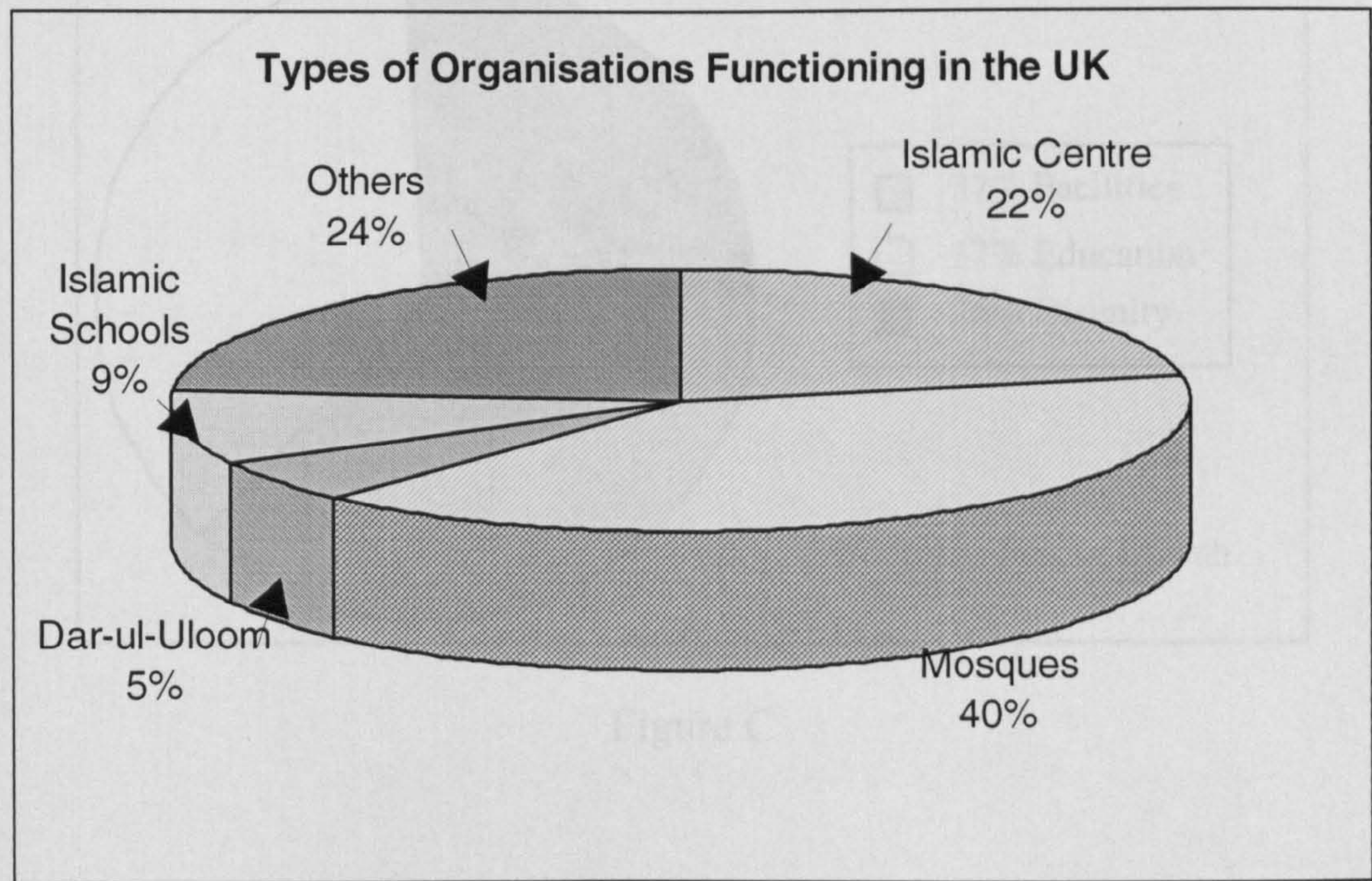


Figure A

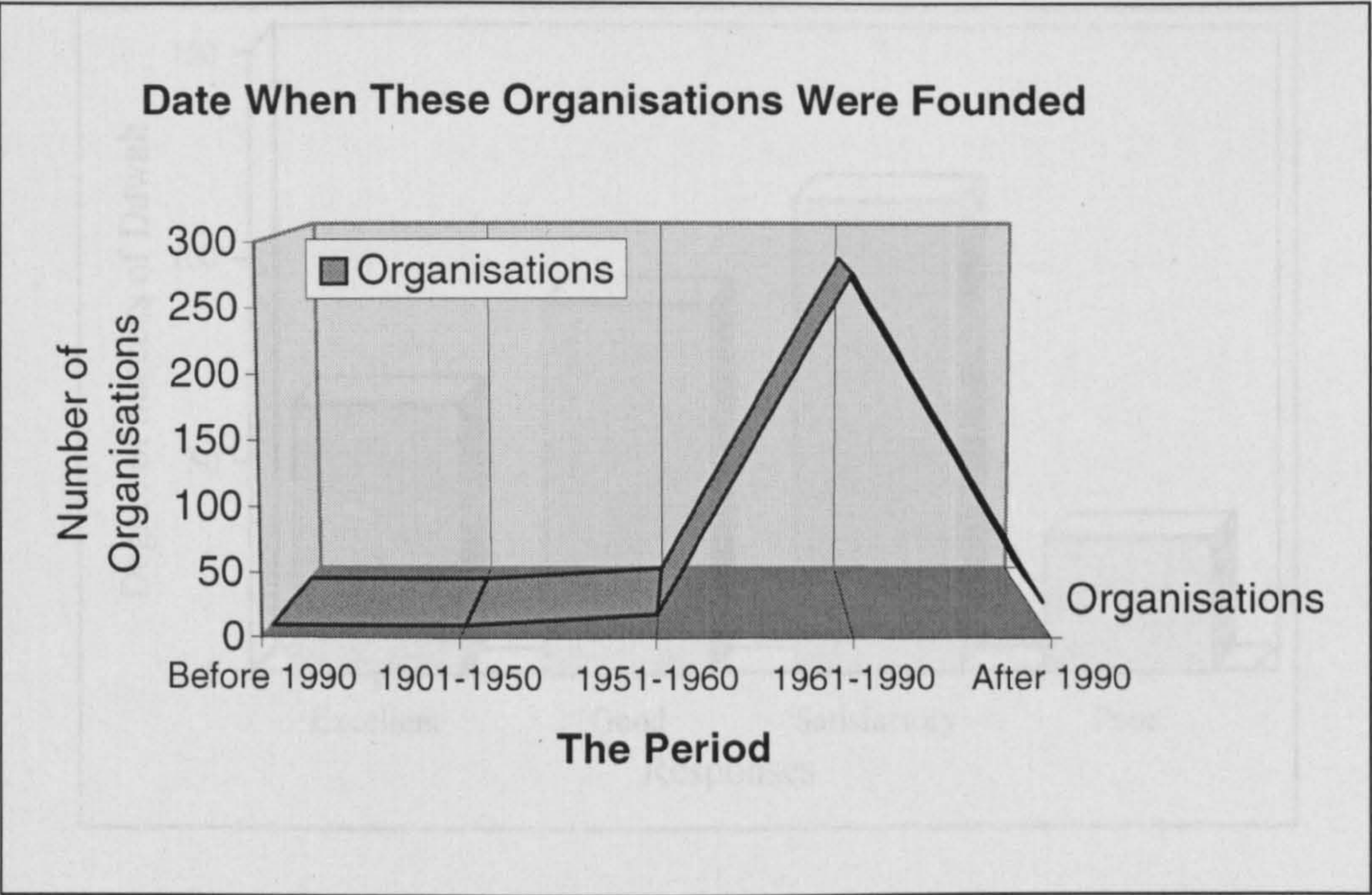


Figure B

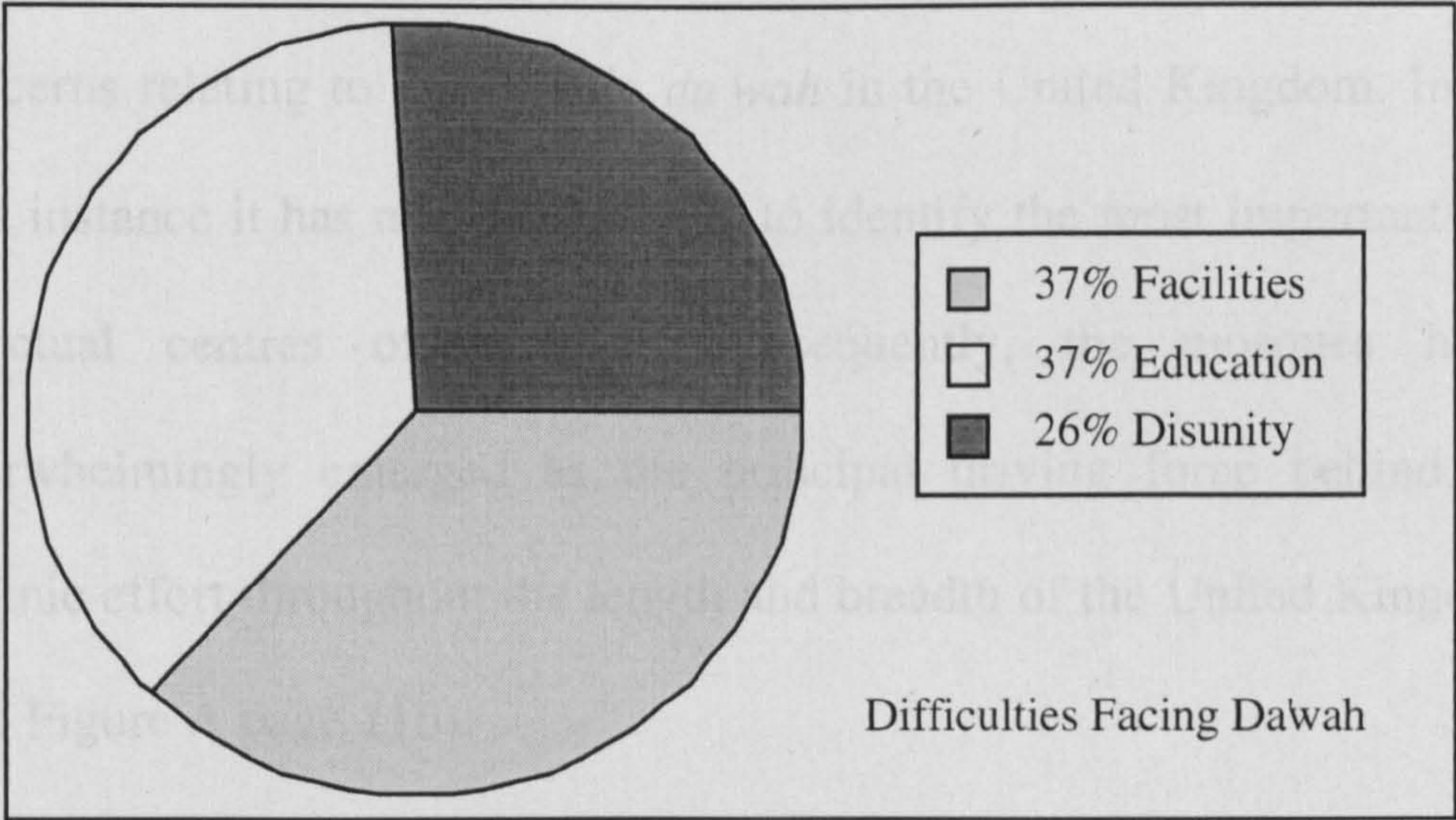


Figure C

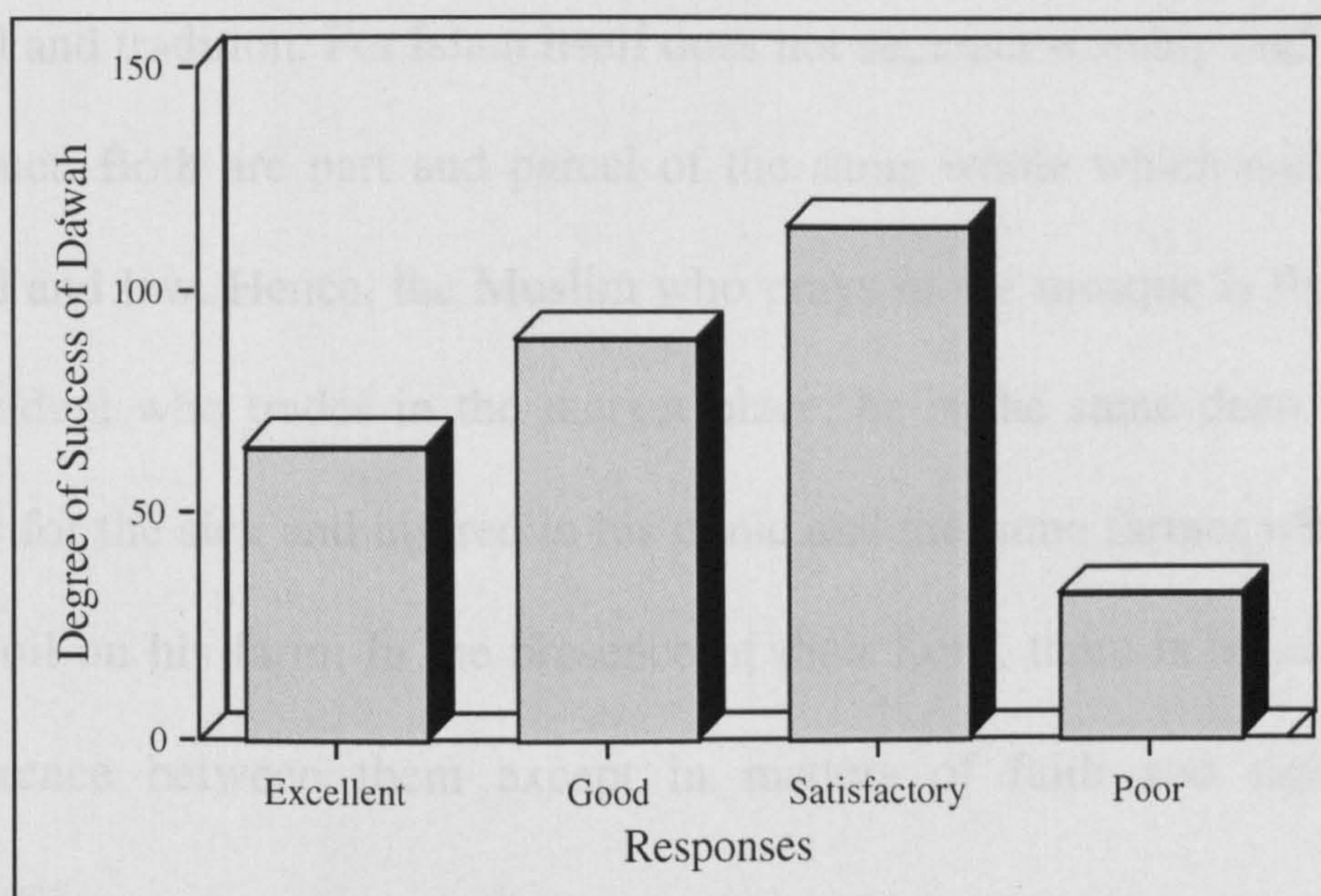


Figure D

The results of this survey have brought to light several significant concerns relating to the Islamic *da'wah* in the United Kingdom. In the first instance it has made it possible to identify the most important and effectual centres of activity. Consequently, the mosques have, overwhelmingly emerged as the principal driving force behind the Islamic effort throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom (see Figure A page 116).

Although the details of these results were not predictable, they are for all intents and purposes, quite consistent with the teachings of Orthodox

creed and tradition. For Islam itself does not separate worship and social conduct. Both are part and parcel of the same whole which embodies creed and law. Hence, the Muslim who prays in the mosque is the very individual who trades in the market place, he is the same doctor who cares for the sick and injured in his clinic and the same farmer who tills the soil on his farm. In the presence of their Lord, there is actually no difference between them except in matters of faith and righteous conduct.

The day to day practices and activities of Muslims in The United Kingdom is, therefore, no different from that of their counterparts in other parts of the world. They all, in the final analysis, share the same beliefs, submit to the same law and aspire to the same ideals.

Apart from fulfilling its primary function as a centre of worship³⁸, the role of the mosque is also to serve as a rendezvous of guidance, a retreat for training and an academy for learning. It is in effect the nerve centre of any Muslim community.

Another significant outcome of the survey focuses on the historical development of Islamic organisations in the United Kingdom (see Figure B page 117). In the first instance, it sheds light on how the

³⁸ *al- Zarqah, Muḥammad, al- ʾibādah fī al-Islām*, London 1974, p. 6

foundations of Islamic activity were laid in the United Kingdom during the period 1951-60. The efforts of those early years were apparently marked by caution and uncertainty.

The decade of the 1960s heralded a new phase of Islamic activism and enterprise. With the rising influx of immigrants from the Islamic lands, the stage became set for bolder and more far-reaching initiatives. During these turbulent years of Cold War confrontation, Western governments were particularly keen to extend their influence and limit the spread of Communism. Hence, throughout the sixties they sanctioned liberal policies on immigration and cultural co-operation. It was in this climate of accommodation and tolerance that many Islamic organisations were founded.

The collapse of the Soviet Empire and the end of the Cold War in 1989 marked yet another turning point in the fortunes of Islam both in the East and the West. In what appeared to be an ominous and sinister shift, the international media abandoned its former rhetoric of the red danger and instigated a campaign against what it called Islamic fundamentalism. Sooner rather than later, the meaning and image of Islam became linked to the evil scourges of international terrorism and crime. Be that as it may, it should be emphasised that Islam is a religion

of tolerance and compassion. For if the Prophet *Moḥammad* had been inspired by vindictiveness, he would not have allowed the unbelieving Makkans to go scot-free after his conquest of *Makkah* in 632 AD. Similarly, if *Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbī* had been motivated by a passion for revenge, he would not have granted an unconditional amnesty to the Christian Crusaders after he re-conquered Jerusalem in 1186 AD.

The political fall-out of the media-led campaign of Islamophobia was a drastic reduction in the number of Muslim immigrants, students and political asylum seekers to the United Kingdom. The overall damage was however limited for it did not in any way stunt the growth nor stall the march of Islam in the United Kingdom. Quite the contrary; Islam has continued to make sure and steady progress in all walks of life.

Admittedly, there is still much room for improvement; especially in the organisation and administration of community affairs. In most parts of the country organisational activity remains hampered by internal wrangling and squabbles. Yet, even in the face of setbacks, the general turnover and conversion to Islam has remained persistently high (see Figure C page 117).

Whatever the case, Muslims in the United Kingdom are obliged to co-operate in righteousness and piety. This is a duty entrusted to them by the *Qur'ān*:

“Help you one another in Al-Birr and At-Taqwa; but do not help one another in sin and transgression. And fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is severe in punishment.”

(5:2)

Surely the spread of the Islamic message will only be realised through the organised and collective effort of Muslims. Indeed, whenever they rise up and transfer the ideals of their religion from the pages of the *Qur'ān* to the world of reality, the help of *Allāh* will descend upon them:

“If the people of the towns had believed and had the Taqwa certainly, we should have opened for them blessings from the heaven and the earth...”

(7: 96)

In the immediate circumstances Muslims in the United Kingdom will have to develop and make maximum use of their resources and expertise. They must embark on programmes that will facilitate the exchange of information and skills both at the individual and social levels. In this regard the value of regular training courses and

conferences can not be over-estimated. There is moreover, an ongoing need for literature and educational material. Accordingly, more resources and must be devoted to the translation and distribution of the vast and untapped treasures of Islamic learning.

In general, the *da'wah* movement in the United Kingdom reveals a satisfactory level of progress. This is further reflected in the broad consensus of opinion among the representatives of the Islamic institutions. This does not, however, negate the fact that there are still major shortcomings existing in the work-structure and methodology. (see Figure D page 118).

While these recommendations do not in any way constitute a blueprint for Islamic revival, they do, nevertheless, provide basic guidelines upon which future activities may be based. For even with their varying schools of thought and jurisprudence, Muslims in the United Kingdom still have before them tangible opportunities to attain progress and excellence.

II.10- Organisations and Sectarian Tendencies

II.10.1- The Brilwy

There are throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom mosques which are directly controlled by the Brilwy³⁹. The majority of the Muslims in the United Kingdom belong to the Brilwy school of thought. They are in the main *Sunnī* Muslims and generally follow the interpretations of Islam of *Mawlānā Aḥmad Riḍā Khān* (1856-1921) of Bareilly in India. He wrote many books on the life of the Prophet and jurisprudence. He also believed in the Sufi doctrine of '*Nur-i-Muḥammad*' ('the light of *Muḥammad*'), which was itself derived from God's own light and had existed from the beginning of creation. It meant that the Prophet, though human, was also more than human. Moreover he had unique knowledge of the unknown (*ʿImāl-Qhaīb*).

Brilwy celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (*ʿĪd Mīlād al- Nabī*) each year with religious songs, prayers and other devotional acts. They host lavish feasts for their adherents and supporters. The life of the Prophet *Muḥammad* is itself recalled and eulogised in prose, poetry and song. In

³⁹ *Zahīr, Iḥsān Ilāhī, Al-Brilwy: Tārīkh wa ʿAqāʾid*, 1st edition, Lahore 1983, pp. 13-20.

addition, glowing tributes are paid to *Shaykh ʿAbd al- Qādir Jīlāny*, a great Sufi saint buried in Baghdad, and other prominent Sufi saints. The Brilwy, as stated above, regard the prophetic status as divinely bestowed and, as such, higher than that of ordinary men. In all these matters the other Muslims sects not agree with their Brilwy counterparts.

II.10.2- The Deobandi

The Deobandi have their own mosques and live quiet and reserved lives. They are a breakaway group of *Sunnī* Muslims who do not profess the high veneration for the Prophet that the Brilwy do. They consider Islam as a personal religion for them rather than as a social religion. In their behaviour they tend to be subservient and submissive to authority; therefore having little or no ambition to establish an Islamic state. The teachings of the Deobandi way are so superficial that it invariably fails to produce Islamic workers fit to challenge the secularist and modernist ideas penetrating into the Muslim family. Notwithstanding, there are several Deobandi seminars still functioning in British society.

II.10.3- The *Tablīghī Jamā'at*

Muḥammad Ilyās (1885-1944) was the founder of the *Tablīghī Jamā'at* in India. He and his followers channelled much of their organisational efforts in missionary activities. In practice these activities almost entirely founded upon six pillars. These are :-

1. The profession of faith.
2. The performance of the prescribed prayers.
3. Knowledge and remembrance of God.
4. Respect for all Muslims.
5. Sincere intentions.
6. The giving of time.

The *Tablīghī* strict adherence to these six points is theoretically outlined in their standard text, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn*. They travel extensively in groups by plane or train or car to encourage other Muslims and bring them around to their way of thinking. Their main centre in the United Kingdom is located in Dewsbury in Manchester. The *Tablīghī* are generally polite, courteous and well behaved. They are spread all over the United Kingdom through their Mosques and Islamic centres and

they have been quite successful in their missionary activities even though they, like the Deobandies, are non-political.

II.10.4- Ahl al-Ḥadīth

Ahl al-Ḥadīth is a reformist movement⁴⁰. Their teachings and activities are thoroughly inspired by the Holy *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth*. Their understanding of Islam is therefore considered to be very similar to that of the Companions of the Prophet .

The *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* first appeared as an organisation in the United Kingdom in the early 1970s. Today, they have well established branches in all major cities throughout the country. Their membership has grown steadily and runs into many thousands. They very often have Islamic schools adjacent to their mosques for both boys and girls. They publish several magazines such as; *The Straight Path* (in English), *Al-Ebanah* (in English), *Al-Ṣirāṭ al- Mustaqeem* (in Urdu) and *Al-Hady al- Nabawī* (in Arabic).

Recent research has confirmed that during the latter years of the 19th century all India *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* conferences were held annually,

⁴⁰ *Jameelah Maryam*, Islam in theory and practice, Delhi nd. p. 155.

coinciding with those of the reformist movement which took its cue from the two renowned reformers, Shāh Waliullah of Delhi and *Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al- Wahhāb* in the Arabian Peninsula. Other pioneering members of the *Ahl al-Ḥadīth* were *Sayyid Nadhīr Ḥusyn* of Delhi who founded the *Raḥmānyyah madrasah* which is considered one of the first *Ahl al-Ḥadīth madrasahs* in India.

II.10.5- The Shī‘ah

The Shī‘ah arose from a purely political conflict in the late 7th century. Gradually, however, the group’s political stand acquired a theological content. Probably under Gnostic and Old Iranian dualistic influences, *Shi‘aism*⁴¹ developed a doctrine of esoteric knowledge, centred upon the figure of the *Imām*, or exemplary “leader” through whom the truths of the *Qur’ān* are revealed. Such a doctrine was adopted also by the Sufis. *Shī‘ah* in the United Kingdom are very active and most conspicuous in their festival’s, such as ‘*Ashurā*’. They publish many magazines such as *al- Naṣr*, *al- Thawra* and *al- Gazīrah*.

⁴¹ *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, vol. 6, Chicago 1993, p. 410, see also; *Zahīr, Iḥṣān Ilāhī, al- Shī‘ah wa al- Sunnah*, Lahore 1980, Idaratarjuman al-Sunnah Lahore.

Their Beliefs about their *Imāms*

Among the fabricated views and beliefs of the *Shī'ah* is that they hold their *Imāms* to be of divine origin, much above human beings, and even above the Prophets and Messengers .

AL-Kullmī the great scholar of the *Shī'ah* and their *Muḥaddith* relates in his Book entitled "*al-Kāfī*" in the chapter captioned: "*The Imāms can know anything whenever they wish to do so*" on the authority of *Ja'far*; "Whenever an *Imām* wishes to possess the knowledge of anything, he can easily know it."⁴²

They regard their *Imāms* as supernatural beings who can know how long a man has to live and know his hour of destiny, from whom nothing remains concealed, and who possess (the treasures of) the whole world.

They have the Power to subdue all creatures and overcome them.

In the United Kingdom, the *Shī'ah* as in any other place. Their main centre in London is the *Imām al- Khu'ī* centre who consider one of their greatest Scholars.

They are communities of *Ithnā 'Asharīs* and *Ismā'īlīs* they not only in London, but also spread throughout the country, in cities like Leicester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Birmingham and Leeds. It has been estimated that

⁴² *al- Kullmī, al- Hujjah*, vol.1, Qum nd, p. 258.

there are 25,000 Iranians with various loyalties in the United Kingdom, but significant numbers of the *Shī'ah* originate in the subcontinent and came to the United Kingdom either directly or Via East Africa.

The East African group in particular are marked by their social status and wealth.

They tend to be naturally conservative; various dispositions towards Iran and recent events there are to be found amongst the South Asian *Shī'ah* in general.

II.10.6- Al-Jamā'ah al-Islāmīyyah

The *Jamā'ah al-Islāmīyyah* was founded by Mawlānā Abū Al'āl al-Mawdūdī (1903-1979)⁴³. It started as a political party in the late 1920s and opposed the creation of Pakistan on the basis that nationalism was alien to Islam.

The followers of this political party are very many. They are well organised and conduct many educational and social activities among both men and woman. The *Jamā'ah* has also a particular appeal to youth movements. They propagate their message through the publication of books, news magazines and newsletters.

⁴³ *Jameelah Maryam*, Islam in theory and practice, Delhi nd. p. 327.

II.10.7- Organisation and Sectarian Tendencies

Young Muslim organisations concentrate on university campuses throughout the United Kingdom, and are especially active in areas of high concentration of ethnic minorities. Their main target is to reestablish the *Khilāfah*, However their methodology is unclear at best.

The prominence given to *Hizb al-Taḥrīr* has recently been out of all proportion to the group's impact on general Muslim life in the United Kingdom. Many of the older generation regard them as being 'Hot-heads', who know nothing of true Islamic tradition and, if it had not been for the publicity given to the group in the now notorious 'Kathy Evans Article' in The Guardian (7th February 1994), it is unlikely that they would have commanded any real prominence outside the student community. The prime recruiting ground for the group is amongst students and young people, some of whom are Muslims poorly educated in terms of Islam; other recruits include people who are disillusioned with society in general. Both sets of recruits are impatient to make an impact on the current situation between East & West. The movement is born from a certain frustration and sense of powerlessness which has overtaken global Islam in the post-colonial era. Many active members

have little understanding of the message which they proclaim and they tend to steer clear of better Islamically educated Muslims. This is not to imply that there is not an inner circle of dedicated 'visionaries' who are prepared to manipulate the 'foot soldiers' to their own ends. A comparison to the Nation of Islam social hierarchy could be helpful in understanding the way in which the party members appeal to the under-25s. Whilst there will probably be a core of committed members who maintain their vision into later life, one would expect that most of the current members will join mainstream Muslim orthodoxy as they get older. It is unlikely that they will be a lasting force in the United Kingdom.

II.10.8- The Younger Generation

One of the main criticisms which has been revelled by the British media against the Muslim youth in this country is that they tend to be introverted, insular and even anti-social. These allegations have actually affected the thinking and attitudes of many young Muslims. They have, as a consequence, bent over backwards to appease and gain recognition from these critics, even at the expense of their faith in some instances.

Hence it is not entirely strange to find communities where significant numbers of their youth have become culturally assimilated.

Although Islam does not in any way endorse asceticism and anti-social tendencies, it does, nevertheless, encourage Muslims to preserve their distinct religious and cultural identity. *Allāh* almighty has in fact declared in the Noble *Qur'ān*;

Truly the religion in the Sight of Allāh is Islām

(3:19)

Later in the same chapter, He actually warns;

And whoever seeks a religion other than Islām, it will never be accepted of him and in the Hereafter he would be among the losers.

(3:85)

In order to stem the drift away from the fold of Islam, Muslim community leaders across the country have spent much time and effort in developing educational programs and activities. The oldest and, perhaps, most popular of these programs is the after school madrasah. Through this channel young Muslims are provided with the fundamental teachings of Islam, its various forms of worship, values and rules. In some localities, however, more emphasis is placed on the memorisation of the *Qur'ān*. While this is undoubtedly a very noble and virtuous

exercise, it does not constitute Islamic training in its entirety. Certainly it would be more beneficial if such programs were more structurally balanced, to include, apart from the memorising of the *Qur'ān*, studies in *ʿAqīdah, Adab and Muʿāmalāt*.

In retrospect it has become quite evident that the lack of effective leadership has been a major obstacle in the path of Islamic progress. The challenges confronting the Muslim community require much more than dogmatic and haphazard responses. Every so often parents and local leaders tend to dictate Islamic views and judgements on issues without explaining their revision or methods of practice. A very notable case in point is the question of marrying non-Muslim girls. A good number of Muslim boys have in recent years taken this course and reaped many harvests of discord and acrimony. In most instances, the clash of beliefs, ideals and culture have left both parties looking for the easiest escape route. The young Muslims who have attempted such marriages are invariably condemned and considered as symbols of failure. Yet only in few instances do Muslim elders take the time to explain the concept of marriage in Islam and the virtues of family life. As a consequence it seems that many more young Muslims may become the victims not only of their ignorance but also of the incompetence of their leaders. Surely

conditions will remain unchanged for as long as the role of the family remains obscure and the status of the woman is misunderstood.

In the light of the above challenges, remedial steps to be taken are follows:

First

There is a need to establish more community centres in the mosques so that young Muslims may have adequate opportunities to interact and share experiences, knowledge and skills for both boys and girls

Second

Regular training camps need to be organised for young Muslims during their vacations from school, and particularly in the summer time.

Third

Muslim youth counsellors should be assigned to schools, mosques and Islamic centres.

Fourth

Special courses should be conducted by qualified *Imāns*.

Fifth

Greater effort needs to be made to promote the learning of Arabic, for it is only through this medium that Muslims can attain the fullest

understanding of the *Qur'ānic* message and the life-style which it enjoins.

II.10.9- Muslims and Marriage

Shifting priorities are perhaps at their most obvious amongst the generation of young Muslims roughly in the age bracket 18 to 30. There is the natural rebelliousness of youth and the idealism to "set the world torights" which is part of belonging to this age group, currently associated with the New Age and Green politics. A "fringe" or "loony left" element is often present in both political and religious circles. It can be exemplified in the limited prominence of the group *Hizb al-Taḥrīr*,⁴⁴ which is the Muslim equivalent of student protest groups like the Socialist Workers Party or religious groups like the Evangelists. This is the generation who are most likely to be affected by recent immigration laws, especially as they impact on potential marriage partners. With the expansion of higher education over the past decade, there are many more educated Muslims in this group, and this is a

⁴⁴ *Belher, S. M*, Islamic party of Britain. He stated that "Hizb al- Tahrir has been around Britain universities for more than two decades without making the slightest impact until they found their 'Guardian' angle. Islamic Student Societies in London and elsewhere had this handful of confused, argumentative pseudo intellectuals packed away in a corner until the British media put the spotlight on them and elevated them to hither to unknown fame. The Guardian Scotland, Nov. 8 1994,

common age for new converts to Islam. Similarly this is the group who are having to find a new way of living out their Islam in the context of various social trends.

Many subcontinental Muslims in the United Kingdom maintain strong links with the extended family or clan⁴⁵ which has remained in the country of origin and it is on these people that the current immigration laws have their greatest impact. To cement and strengthen these clan ties, it is still a common practice for young British Muslims to be pledged to marry family members from abroad. Often these pledges are entered into without the knowledge or genuine consent of the British party concerned. There are still instances of such marriages being a way of allowing family members from overseas to enter the United Kingdom and settle here. This is where the primary purpose rule, which states that “the primary purpose of entry into the United Kingdom is to marry and not to seek employment or be a burden on the state”. It is not too difficult for the young British Muslim man who has a job to claim that his intended wife is joining him here for the primary purpose of marriage but when the man is unemployed the claim is more difficult to

⁴⁵ For further reading see *Hammūdah. ‘Abd al- ‘Aṭī*, The family structure in Islam, Indiana 1977.p. 60.

sustain. Often the issues are heightened when it is a British Muslim woman who wants to bring in a prospective husband. If she is not working then it is hard to claim that the man is not seeking admission as an economic migrant who will then seek work here. This contributes to the desire of young Muslim women to find permanent work so that they can claim equal rights with men in terms of being able to support their prospective husbands.

There is a growing trend, on the part of women especially, not to want a husband who has grown up in a totally different culture and perhaps with different ideas of the place of women within society. It is this tension which often results in the "horror stories" in the press of "forced marriages" in which a young woman is pressured into taking a husband of her family's choosing. More educated Muslim men likewise feel the need for a wife who will share their vision of future life and can be a genuine companion in a common life together. The result of both these trends is that fewer marriage partners will be sought from overseas with the concomitant stresses which this places on elders in the United Kingdom who feel themselves to be under certain pressures from family members overseas.

Another factor in the immigration process is that permission is given subject to the couple staying together for at least one year after the marriage. Young women especially feel themselves to be trapped by this in terms of having to endure the marriage until the year is over and living with the rejection of their community should the marriage break down. There is still a stigma attached to being a young divorced Muslim woman especially if there are children involved.

Finally, the prohibition on elderly parents being allowed to join their children in the United Kingdom until they reach the age of sixty five has a particular impact on Muslims who came to the United Kingdom as young workers leaving their parents behind. This situation is particularly acute when the father dies leaving a widowed mother, who naturally looks to her children in the United Kingdom to support her in her old age. This situation can be expected to become more pressing over the next couple of decades before it passes with the death of the older generation.

Tensions between the generations are often most pronounced over the question of marriage in general. Younger Muslims who have become more knowledgeable and committed to Islam with maturity and

education find that the Islam of their parents no longer attracts them. They perceive that they have found a "purer" expression of their religion. This militates against the traditional patterns of seeking marriage partners and has seen a rise in marriage bureaux, which aim to bring such people together. It is noteworthy that for such young people, the priority is given to a commitment to Islam rather than any racial affiliation. This can be seen in the advertisements for marriage partners in the Muslim press.

Some research has been done into attitudes to marriage amongst young Muslim university students. This indicates that there is a decline in the willingness to have marriages arranged. Similarly, research into the potential dangers of cousin marriages is likely to have an impact on such young people.

The non-acceptance of racial and family ties has already been noted as a trend amongst young educated Muslims; however this should not be interpreted as any disinclination towards Islam as such. With the expansion of education there are more young educated Muslims in the United Kingdom than there were in the previous generation. A particularly significant trend is for such Muslims to seek an education

in the Arabic language⁴⁶ so that they can fully understand the *Qur'ān*. Of necessity, this leads to tension with local *Imāms* who cannot cope with such a challenge. It is common to hear young Muslims complain of the lack of education of many *Imāms* who not only fail to understand the pressure of life under which the young live but also have a limited grasp of the Islamic sciences.

Such young Muslims are by-passing the traditional *ūlamā'* and meeting in groups to explore the teaching of the *Qur'ān* "as though it were revealed yesterday". This brings a certain vibrancy to their personal commitment but they also tend to ignore the accumulated wisdom of fourteen centuries of Islamic scholarship and thus lay themselves open to repeating the mistakes of earlier generations of Muslims. From the perspectives of an historian of religion, one might see this as a naturally recurrent theme in any religion's history.

One of the regular features of the Muslim weekly newspaper Q News, which caters for this group above all else, is the fortnightly column of questions on *fiqh* addressed to *Shaykh Darsh* (May Allāh bless him). this can be seen as a far-sighted attempt to keep young Muslims in

⁴⁶ For more details in "traditional Prerequisites of an ideal mate", *Hammūdah*, 'Abd al- 'Aṭī, The family structure in Islam, Indiana 1977.p. 86.

touch with the traditions of scholarship, whilst at the same time opening up the possibility of the development of a new strain within fiqh which is aimed at addressing the question of "how can one live as a committed Muslim in the United Kingdom in the 20th century?" It is clear from the quality and detail of questions asked that there is a genuine desire to remain faithful to the Islamic tradition.

The natural desires of immigrants, as expressed in the adage of "wanting a better future for one's children", does not leave young educated Muslims untouched. There is an upward social mobility with the accompanying "middle class aspirations" of wanting a better lifestyle for oneself and enhanced opportunities for one's children. This can be exemplified by the growing tendency to move into districts within the catchment area of "better schools" and a greater willingness to accept full parental responsibility for the religious upbringing of children which comes from moving away from the immediate environs of the mosque.

It is within this age-range that most of the new converts to Islam are to be found. There has always been a tendency to be drawn into Islam through the Sufi path and this continues both amongst "white" converts

and those from the Afro-Caribbean community. Another path towards Islam can be seen through intellectual enquiry. People are being drawn by the "certainty" which they find in the "clear-cut" guidance given by Islam rather than the perceived "relativism" which such converts might see in other western religious traditions. It is noteworthy that Christians form a significant part of this wave of converts; they see contemporary Christianity as having "lost its way" in terms of giving strong moral guidance on a righteous and godly life. An important group of such people are women converts, as has been illustrated by articles in the British press and by some reports from the USA where it is held that women outnumber male converts by four to one. Some of these women convert to Islam as a result of/or in the process of marriage but this does not account for the numerical significance of this group. Women are being attracted by the dignity which they see accorded to women in real Islam. This is a particular quirk of feminism which makes women reject the "exploitation" of their sex in the West and turn towards the perceived egalitarianism and structured position of women within real Islam. The prominence of wearing the *ḥijāb* as a public sign of this conversion should be noted here. It is a "statement" of the convert's new-found faith.

Young Muslims are not exempt from the common social trends within society especially due to the peer pressure from their fellow youth. The image of Muslims as being one of the most law-abiding groups within society has been somewhat tarnished by the increasing incidence of Muslims amongst the prison population and appearing in court charged with various crimes. The tendency to racial violence has already been noted, but there is also a general "gang culture" which can be seen in many inner city areas into which Muslims are being drawn. Such young people have been implicated in trafficking in drugs and organised prostitution. Moves to counter the "waywardness of youth" can be seen in the growth of various "young Muslim" groups being organised by Muslim associations to train and guide young people away from this tendency and towards social behaviour. In general, the apparent hopelessness and lack of an economic future, which comes with unemployment, must be seen as a primary cause of the breakdown in young Muslims' social behaviour.

II.11- Islamic Media

The image of Islam which is portrayed through the media is dominated by events overseas which are far more influential than any "home produced" material. Perceptions within the national press are shifting

with some hopeful signs but there has, as yet, been no breakthrough in terms of local radio.

It is a rare day when there is no major piece of international news with a particular Muslim interest. The focus of these overseas reports might be Bosnia, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Algeria or Egypt. Almost without exception the image of Islam which is painted is harsh and "unreasonable". This can be summed up in the outrageous caricature of being "still in the Middle Ages". Nevertheless, this is the common perception which feeds the growing fear of Islam in the general population but particularly, perhaps, amongst some of the political and influential classes. This emerges when one hears of fears that Muslim schools in the United Kingdom will become "training grounds for Islamic Fundamentalists".

That such an image is based on prejudice is granted but it is strengthened every time that there is "an abuse of human rights", a "terrorist attack" or "another fatwa issued". Such perceptions tend to undercut the support which Muslims in the United Kingdom have received from the "liberal" classes. This was apparent in the case of Salman Rushdie where liberals were torn between "supporting the right

of free speech" and defending a slighted minority. It must also be said that Muslims with high media profiles (Kalim Siddiqui is the obvious example on the national stage) have used the technique of saying something outrageous to attract attention and then withdrawing to a more moderate position afterwards. All too often, it is only the outrageous headline which sticks in the mind and feeds prejudice.

The image of Muslims in the United Kingdom cannot be mentioned without reference to the campaign against *The Satanic Verses* which has coloured all perceptions ever since. "The man in the street" is likely to associate two things with that campaign: the *fatwa*, which is usually blamed on "the *Ayatollah*"; and the public book burning. The latter is the image which sticks most in people's minds and probably has done more to shape the perception of Muslims in the United Kingdom than any other thing. Its impact on the intelligentsia and politicians is all-pervasive. Such an action has an indelible place in the collective psyche of Europeans.

By comparison with the impact of these images, the kind of "home produced" television programs dealing with Islam have little impact. The *Akbar Ahmed* series, *Living Islam.*, screened in 1993, was by far

the best at presenting a "cultured" face of Islam in the modern world. By contrast, series like Ziauddin Sardar's *Islamic Conversations* had a minuscule impact as it was "high-brow" television and not well done at that. The television companies are not innocent in this affair as the norm for programs on Islam is either that they will pick out the worst aspects like programs on drugs, militants or domestic violence.

Within the national press, a significant turning point was the speech of the Prince of Wales in Oxford 1993. That gave Islam a certain credibility and made it a suitable field for serious reporting. Many of the broadsheet articles after 1993 have presented a much more sympathetic image of Islam, as can be witnessed by their almost unanimous support for Muslim voluntary- aided schools. The two best areas of coverage so far have been education and women converts to Islam.

There are two less favourable aspects of the national press coverage of Muslims. One is the major influences on popular perceptions exercised by the tabloid press. The image of Islam portrayed here is that of an "oddity". They are constantly seeking the bizarre, be it in the form of misbehaviour or distortions which emphasise the "foreignness" of Islam to British life". The other dimension is the damaging piece of reporting

which so misrepresents Islam and Muslims that it almost amounts to misinformation.

Articulate and knowledgeable people who could put forward positive images and provide background briefing for journalists and researchers would be worth considering. This could be achieved by establishing an Islamic press office staffed with scholars, historians, critics and researchers specialised in the affairs of the Muslim communities in the West; there is no shortage of openings for measured and well-informed views to be expressed. It would be necessary for such a press office to make its presence felt by contacting media offices, attending functions and generating a reasonably high-profile and reputation for reliability and candour. Some one with the media skill of the late *Kalim Siddiqui* would be ideal but even though his track record and personal agenda would rule him out; e.g., his support for the establishment of the Islamic state via violence and revolution.

Muslims have still been unable to break into national radio in any significant measure. This is a major shortcoming, as many Muslims, especially women at home, are much more likely to listen to the electronic media than read newspapers. Local radio could be a positive

tool for education and disseminating information. This has been noticed in areas such as Bradford, Birmingham, parts of London, some northern towns and in Glasgow last year in *Ramaḍān*. There could be genuinely local aspects to such programming which could help to overcome some of the sectarian barriers, especially within the Indo-Pakistani subcontinental community. Up until 1995 there were Muslim-based applications for licenses in Bradford and London but they were all unsuccessful with the exception of Fast FM in Bradford, which broadcasts for the month of *Ramaḍān* alone. The general perception is that their applications lacked political awareness and professional polish. They have to take the common perception into account when presenting their case. Some professional guidance and a good political counsellor would be of marked assistance. Additionally, and of great importance, they must abide by the Islamic principles governing reporters, which are⁴⁷:

1. Truthfulness.
2. Authentication of information.
3. Staying clear of enticing desires.

⁴⁷ *Mutawallī, M., Uṣūl Al-ʾIlām Al- Islāmī*, Kuwait 1982, p. 111

4. Manifesting Islamic virtues.

Most of the Muslim press comes from a particular ideological stable, such as *Impact International*, or is little more than a monthly update on a particular agenda, such as *Muslim News*. Since the closure of the *Daily Awaz* in May 1994, the only bi-lingual newspaper serving the Muslim population is the *Daily Jang* which is much more accurately described as a newspaper for Pakistani/Bangladeshi interest groups in the United Kingdom. Its Urdu pages are many more than its English pages and the bulk of news is centred on the subcontinent. It aims to serve both a "secularised" and a "religious" readership.

II.12- Da'wah

If one interprets *da'wah* in the widest sense of "living one's life in such submission to God that others are attracted by one's example to inquire into Islam and possibly embrace the faith"⁴⁸, then there are several good examples of Muslims opening up to the wider community so that their witness may be seen. These include inviting people to celebrate *īds*, distributing welfare among the general populace, running housing schemes, fund-raising for charitable causes, engaging in sporting

⁴⁸ See for more details Maḥfwd, *ʿAlī, Hidayat al- Murshādyn*, Cairo 1952, p. 17.

competitions, hosting health and community projects and working with people sentenced to community service⁴⁹.

In a slightly more overt way, there is a willingness to stage artistic and cultural exhibitions which include talks on Islam and Muslim life. These are staged for the general public, for schools, community groups and churches. The work of the Islamic foundation in Leicester and the United Kingdom Islamic Mission in general are worthy of note. The influence of the former has made Leicester particularly rich in outreach activities and the latter is constantly in demand for speakers and for groups who want to visit a mosque. Two recent projects launched by the Islamic Foundation are of value here; one of supporting new Muslims and the other of developing cultural awareness.

The most active group in terms of intra-Muslim *da'wah* is the *Tablighī Jamā'ah* which has its headquarters in *Dewsbury*. *Tablighī* members are frequently to be seen visiting Muslim communities in various parts of the country. Typically, they lodge in a local mosque and go from house to house encouraging people to a more fervent practice of Islam, or at

⁴⁹ *Hajārī, Hamdān*, says about Da'wah; that the acceptance of righteous deedsworship or da'wah, has basic conditions recommended by some scholars.
 A. Intentions, while doing such deeds, must be totally for Allāh's sake only.
 B. Such a deed must be performed in accordance with the Sunnah. See for more details *Qawā'id al- Da'wah al- Islāmīyyah*, al-Khartūm 1995, p. 158.

least, their strictly Deobandi version thereof. Many young people, mainly men but also occasional married couples, agree to devote a period of time to serving the *Jamā'ah* in this way.

II.13- Mosques

There seems to be no end to the number of mosques which are to be built in the United Kingdom⁵⁰. In the course of 1994, CSIC (Christian Studies Islamic Centre) has recorded 82 separate mosque plans ranging from simple house conversion to a 5.5m pounds project by the Turkish Cypriot community in London “conversion church in seven sisters donated by sultan Brony”. There is an increase in the number of purpose-built mosques and there appears to be a shift from older converted premises into more prestigious and permanent constructions. In some cases, mosques are being built on prominent sites as to make a statement about the permanency of Islam in the United Kingdom. As the first generation of *Sufī* masters grows older, there are moves to build memorials to them in the United Kingdom where they worked; two examples of this would be in Coventry and Cardiff where they build for

⁵⁰ See Figure 3 page (36)

‘Abdul Wahab Ṣydygy on his grave Mashhad for memorising and visiting in Cardiff where *‘Abdullah al- Ḥakamy* build *Zāwīah* for *ḍikir*

There would appear to be less money coming from overseas for mosque building now although come generous gifts come from individuals. It is becoming more usual for the affluent members of the community to become substantial benefactors. This is noticeable in Glasgow but also in other areas, particularly around Brielwy mosque complexes. The usual range of human emotions is involved in this trend, ranging from gifts and tokens of gratitude to image building and the enhancement of prestige within the community.

The shift towards accommodating women in mosques proceeds slowly. There are still numerous mosques which effectively ban women altogether. In others the provisions are so sparse that few attend *jum‘ah* prayers. It is only in the larger central mosques in city centres, more "liberal" mosques and specialist *jum‘ahs* such as in universities that any significant number of Muslim women attend regularly. Younger women are demanding their rights in this respect, and gradually there will come a change through greater mobility outside the home for women, who will choose to attend *jum‘ah* where they are welcome.

One of the on-going areas of concern with mosques is permission to call the *ādhān* from the *manārah* using electronic amplification. Some mosques like Whitechapel Mosque in East London and *Al- Raḥmah* Mosque in Cardiff have permission to do so on special occasions. e.g. during *Ramaḍān*, and others on a day time. In all cases the call may only be broadcast during set daylight hours when it is less likely to cause a disturbance.

When mosques are refused planning permission “so far we have more than 100 case”, the most common grounds are through inadequate provision, fear of traffic congestion or additional noise in residential areas. There must be cases where local campaigners use these devices to prevent a mosque being built, to which their real objections are on racist grounds or for fear of a reduction in the value of their property, but the frequency of this has not been researched. Because planning permission is a local government affair it is subject to fluctuations both in terms of the area but also in terms of the political composition of the council. When Labour took control of the formally Liberal Tower Hamlets Council there were at least two re-submissions of planning applications with the expectation that they might now get a more favourable hearing.

An important and perhaps uniquely British element of community development has been the way in which mosques have become the hubs around which whole complexes of social welfare projects, like job centres, sheltered workshops and training courses, revolve. There is a great need for mosques to become the centre of educational and cultural activities but this only serves to highlight the most pressing problem which concern mosques and indeed the whole Muslim population in the United Kingdom, i.e. the lack of an effective leadership. Until *Imāms* are trained and community leaders emerge there will be a dearth of vision.

Some mosques have well qualified *Imāms*, and the effects are seen in those who regularly attend those mosques; an example is *Masjid al-Tawhīd* in Leyton, and its *Imām*, *Ṣuhayb Ḥassān*.

II.14- The Muslim Community in Glasgow: a case study

Recent demographic studies of the Scottish city, Glasgow, shown in Table 1 page 50, have revealed the existence of substantial pockets of Muslim communities scattered in various levels of concentration throughout the inner city. These Muslim communities do not constitute a homogeneous entity, in terms of their ethnic. On the contrary, they

represent a network of disparate interest groupings and associations based on religious, economic and social conditions.

The history of Islam in Scotland goes back well before the 20th century. for it was presumably brought to these shores by Muslim immigrants from the Indian subcontinent. Although information concerning these early migratory waves still remains sketchy, there are indications that they may have started as early as the 16th century when Dom⁵¹ tribesmen began to immigrate to Scotland. During the 18th century, other groups of Indian origin also began to settle in Scotland. Foremost among these were Indian seamen serving with the East India company and domestic servants brought from India by returning Scottish families.

In the long run, the steady and continued flow of Muslim immigrants has led to the emergence of Islam as a formidable social force not only within Scottish society but within the United Kingdom as a whole.

⁵¹ "A section of an Indian tribe which migrated from India, for reasons not known, some time near the end of the first millennium A.D.

They remained in Persia for roughly two centuries and then, in the thirteenth century, perhaps to flee from the onslaught of the invading Mongols, moved westward, reaching the Balkans in the fourteenth century. From there they marched to central Europe and entered many countries. By the year 1500 they had crossed the channel and arrived in England. From England they travelled north, perhaps at the very beginning of the sixteenth century; they were found at the court of the Scottish sovereign in the year 1505" see for more details, Bashir Maan, *The New Scots*, London 1992, p. 62.

There were, of course, several other factors which also contributed to this. The relative success of Muslim immigrants in maintaining strong and cemented families was a major driving force. Actually, to the vast majority of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims, the family institution comprised much more than a divisional unit; It was first and foremost an extended body of uncles, aunts, cousins and grandparents all interacting to realise and preserve certain basic objectives. With this understanding, the institution of the family became a veritable vehicle which enabled the Muslim immigrants to pursue a way of life that was more in accord with what they knew in their own land⁵².

The Community Mosque

On another level, the local community mosques have played an equally vital role in harnessing and developing the latent abilities and resources of the Muslims. Far from being remote or exclusive places of worship,⁵³ they, more often or not, became beehive centres of social and cultural activity. By congregating for the five daily prayers, the weekly *Jum'ah*

⁵² For more details, see 'Abd al- 'Aṭi Hammudah, *The Family Structure in Islam*, Chapter 2, Indiana 1977, pp19-48.

⁵³ See for more details, al- Ḥajjārī Ḥamdān, *Qawā'id al- Da'wa al- Islāmīah*, Riyadh 1995, p. 190.

prayer, and the observance of *Ramaḍān*, the Muslims found in their mosques many opportunities to resolve differences, exchange ideas and increase friendship.

There are no doubt, certain periods of the year when the mosques traditionally assume a very special and prominent position in the life of every Muslim community. The Muslims in the United Kingdom, and Glasgow in particular, are no exception to this. For like their co-religionists elsewhere, they also look forward with intense passion and eagerness to the coming of the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, *Ramaḍān*.

The prominence of this month is primarily due to the fact that the *Qur'ān* was revealed during it. *Ibn 'Abbās* and others reported that it was during this month that *Allāh* sent down the entire *Qur'ān* from (*al-Lūḥ al-Maḥfūḍ*) to the heavens of the world. In *Sūrat al-Qadr* *Allāh* said:

Verily we have sent it down in the night of al-Qadr

(97:1)

'Aisha narrated *Allāh's* Messenger said: "Search for the night of *Qadr* in the odd night of the last ten nights of *ramaḍān*"

From there it was revealed parted over a period of twenty-three years in accordance with the needs and conditions of the Muslim community.⁵⁴

No other single event has so dramatically changed human history. On account of this, Muslims everywhere utilise this month. *Ramaḍān*, to dedicate their lives to the sublime ideals and values of the *Qur'ān*. In reality, *Ramaḍān* is a season of hope and opportunity. During this month Muslims in the East and the West converge on their mosques in devotion and reverence, hoping that the mercy and favour of their Lord will descend upon them. When they recall the many traditions of the Prophet *Muḥammad* they become increasingly determined not to allow the opportunities of *Ramaḍān* to elude them. For the noble Prophet himself explained: When the month of *Ramaḍān* begins, the gates of Heaven are opened and the gates of Hell are closed and the devils are chained. With this understanding rooted in their hearts and minds, Muslims throughout the United Kingdom flock to their mosques during this month to engage in acts of devotion, prayer and sacrifice. The vast majority of the Mosques provide “*Ifṭār*” very often for local residents and students. Big Mosques provide whole meal through the whole month.

⁵⁴ *Ibn Kathīr, Muḥammad b. Ismāʿīl, Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, vol. 4, Kuwait 1992. p. 562.

The festival which marks the ending of the fast, *Īd al-Fiṭr* is usually celebrated with great joy and happiness. It is an occasion when Muslims feel a sense of accomplishment and pride in their religion. They therefore exchange visits, gifts and good wishes. For their leaders and *Imāms* in particular, it is an excellent opportunity for them to address their communities and draw their attention to their successes, failures, strengths, weaknesses, rights and duties. In the special prayer which is offered to mark the occasion, the *Imāms* invariably attempt to provide clearer understanding, new hope and sound inspiration

Admittedly one cannot underestimate the pivotal role played by the community mosque in instilling values and reforming characters. Many adults as well as youths have been to resist the dangerous influences of drug abuse, prostitution and crime through their association and regular contact with the mosques. Very often it has been here where they have received counselling, genuine support and moral guidance. Apart from providing the necessary channels for the full expression of religious values and convictions, the mosques, have also, reinforced the faith and doctrinal understanding of the Muslims.

On a very practical level the mosques in Glasgow have led the way in organising and distributing the annual *Zakāt* for poor due. Like prayer

and fasting this is also an obligatory duty in Islam. Through the payment of *Zakāt*, Islam ensures that a portion of the wealth of the rich is transferred each year to the poor and needy. Among the categories of persons who are entitled to *Zakāt* are new converts. God Almighty specifically mentions in the *Qur'ān* the rights of these individuals to *Zakāt* so that their faith can be cemented and their hearts entirely won over to their faith. The more necessity of *Zakāt* is “to purify” and “to grow”. Hence God purifies the wealth of the rich and blesses it with growth. Indeed its regular and strict payment further helps the well to do to overcome their greedy. Refusal to pay *Zakāt* in Islam is a major sin and its punishment is even greater, as the Prophet has warned;

“Whoever is made wealthy by Allāh and does not pay the Zakāt of his wealth, then on the day of resurrection his wealth will be made like a baldheaded poisonous male snake with two poisonous glands in its mouth. The snake will encircle his neck and bite his cheeks and say, ‘I am your wealth, ‘I am your treasure’”.

The Prophet went on to recite the following verse from the *Qur'ān*;

And let those who covetously withheld of that which Allāh has bestowed on them of his bounty (wealth) think that it is good for them [and so they do not pay the obligatory Zakāt]. Nay, it will be worse for them; the things which they covetously withheld shall be tied to their necks like a collar on the day of resurrection. And to Allāh belongs the heritage of the heavens and earth; and Allāh is well-Acquainted

with all that you do.

(3:180)

As in other religions, the mosques play a very important role in the consecration of marriages. Although the marriage contract in Islam can itself be performed by a member of the community, Muslims in Glasgow and elsewhere prefer to conduct these ceremonies in their local mosques. From a strictly religious standpoint it gives them a sense of reassurance and confidence that their marriage will be favoured by God. And yet, from a more mundane point of view it also affords them an opportunity to gain civil recognition for their marriage, since most community mosques have been authorised to conduct and register marriages by the state.

Marriage like any other human undertaking is subject to changing fortunes and hardship; many Muslims resort to their *Imāms* and religious leaders for counsel and directions. The Muslim community in Glasgow is no exception in this regard. Every so often their local *Imāms* are called upon to mediate and rectify fractious marriages. By the very sensitive nature of their tasks, these *Imāms* are always expected to display the highest standards of justice and impartiality. Towards this end, they are morally bound to follow the *Qur'ānic* injunctions and

Prophetic traditions. Indeed, neither the disputing spouses or their mediators can afford to ignore the fact that divorce, though permitted by Islam, is detested by God.

Funeral and burial services are yet other areas in which Glasgow central mosque becomes directly involved. Here again, it has been commissioned by the government to prepare the dead and intern them in a special allocated cemetery for Muslims in Clarkston.

Certainly, not all the mosques in Glasgow city have attained the same level of organisational proficiency and development. Their differences of achievement and impact has been largely dependent upon the availability of expertise, funding and popular support. Significantly, a number of them have received, in the past, substantial aid from their more well-to-do counterparts in the Arab Gulf and elsewhere. The reinforcement of links with organisations such as The Muslim World League and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth has enabled the general community to acquire a definite sense of identity and belonging to a wider international brotherhood. As a consequence the influence and impact of the Muslim community in Glasgow has been substantially enhanced.

**CHAPTER
THREE**

ISLAM AS AN IDEOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

Contemporary Muslim Scholars have, in recent years, devoted great attention to the condition and affairs of Muslim minorities globally. The unprecedented events in the Balkans¹ during the 1990s decisively aroused their interest and concern for the status of Islam in Europe. For this reason they have, accordingly, left no stone unturned to dispel fears, promote understanding and improve relations at the broadest and highest levels. Indeed they have taken up the challenge to encourage an intellectual discourse between the Islamic and western civilisations.

In general, there has been a growing sense of dismay and frustration on the part of certain Muslims at the fact that their religion has been so misunderstood. The stereotype image of Islam as a religion of violence has prompted many Scholars to intensify their efforts to rectify this conception. While it may not be fitting to mention all their opinions and

¹ *al- Dughaym, Muḥammad Maḥmūd, al-Būsnah wa al-Harsak Ḥaqā'iq Ta'rīkhyyah*, Cairo nd. p. 4.

conclusions concerning these matters, it is, nevertheless, important to mention here that the Noble *Qur'ān* itself declares;

*Thus we have made you a just nation, that you be witnesses over mankind
and the messenger be witness over you.*

(2:143)

Muslim Scholars have been at great pains to emphasise that Islam is essentially a religion of moderation which strikes the balance between extreme individualism on the one hand, and absolute collectivism on the other². Thus, it permits individual initiatives in art, business and science without in any way denying collective or social responsibility the soundness of these initiatives. They have, furthermore, demonstrated time and again that Islam is flexible enough to adapt to the needs of modern technological society. Of course Islam does not view the acquisition of knowledge and technology as an end in itself. It is only a means to enable man to realise his noble mission of God's *Istikhlāf* on

² *al- Ashqar, 'ūmar, Nḥwa Thaqāfah Islāmīah Asīlah*, Kuwait 1985.

Earth. Hence modernisation is only rejected when it contradicts and opposes the moral standards set by man's Creator.

III.1- Aspects of Western Society - With Specific Reference to Its Laws, Institutions and Administrative Machinery.

For a long time Muslims have been making their own demands on the public structures of British society. Many aspects of public control and administration are in the hands of the local authorities; therefore working relations between local government and the ethnic and religious minority groups have existed for some time.

On the local level, Muslims have been struggling with local authorities for their rights as a minority in society. These rights have been investigated by Nielson³, who carried out a simple survey during 1985. The total number of authorities, thus contacted was eighty-seven. He asked some important questions concerning Muslims' rights. On these issues some authorities have conceded some rights, other have not. At every step the Muslim community has had to negotiate for Muslim self-determination.

³ "The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe", *Conference on International Migration and Ethnicity*, Stockholm University, Stockholm 1986, pp. 53-61

Small issues have often flared up and gone beyond all normal proportions, thus leaving Muslims with no other choices but to demand their rights. A good example has been the case of the *Al-Ari* sisters. Their experience clearly illustrates this point. For when they began wearing the *ḥijāb* in Altrincham Grammar School for Girls they were turned away from the school.

Other notable issues which have been contested and discussed include:

III.1.1- Burial

1. According to the Islamic *Sharī'ah*, the Muslim community owes four duties to the dead, as follows:

- *Al-Ghusl* for men, women and children over 4 years old.
- *Al-Kafan*
- Funeral Prayer
- Burial

Al-Ghusl, *al-Kafan* and Funeral Prayer are usually performed at any purpose-build mosque but they can be done at home or anywhere else.

The mosques in city centres will usually have such funeral facilities incorporated in their plans.

2- The procedures listed below are a basic outline of the steps required to ensure a quick burial of the deceased:

The first step in all cases is to contact the following people immediately:

- Family doctor
- Funeral director
- Local *Imām*
- Close relatives
- Registrar

3- After performing the *Janazah* prayer at the mosque or cemetery, the body is taken in a coffin to the graveyard. During the summer months the last time for burial is usually 4.00 p.m. and during winter it is normally 3.00 p.m. Certain cemeteries do not allow coffins to be opened at the graveyard. Some cemeteries are now allowing bodies to be buried without using a wooden coffin, so that Muslims can be buried in the *Kafn* only. In most cases, prior arrangements have to be made to do this. These arrangements can be made with the local council cemetery department. There are also now several private Muslim burial sites throughout London. Funeral Directors will have details of these.

4- Burial simply in a shroud is traditional for Muslims. It is clearly very important to realise that most British authorities have a clear response that it cannot be allowed on grounds of health and hygiene. Bradford and Kirklees for example allow burial in a shroud in one cemetery each; however in other authorities like Waverly, Aylesburyvale, Windsor, and Maidenhead. This is not allowed in any cemetery.

There is no indication in the responses of the process by which this situation has been arrived at.

III.1.2- Slaughtering

I can say that so far there appears to be no difficulty about Muslim slaughtering. The *Halāl* Food Authority in London was set up to regulate the meat trade and to ensure that poultry/animals are slaughtered according to the *Sharī'ah*, supervised by Muslim inspectors. Food products and their ingredients, confectionery, and school and prison meals are investigated and endorsed by them for Muslim consumption.

According to English law there is a requirement for humane slaughter of animals. This means that some form of stunning of an animal, including poultry, is required before it is killed; this is Islamically agreeable as far as it is still live.

The Animal Welfare Council, which is a body set up by the Ministry of Agriculture, proposed that stunning should be required without exception, and that the religious communities be given three years to get used to the idea. Muslim reactions against this have been very strong and a consultative group, co-ordinated by the Islamic Cultural Centre in London, issued a detailed rebuttal of the proposals in the spring of 1986.

III.1.3- Education and Voluntary Schools

The earliest Muslim organisations set up in Britain had the instruction of the community among their priorities. Most Muslim supplementary teaching takes place in Mosques and converted houses; however there remain numerous instances where the teachers of such classes want to run them on ordinary school premises. Fortunately authorities have left the decision on allowing the use of school premises for community education purposes to the individual schools. Some councils like Berkshire and Cardiff, have a policy of free encouraging such education by allowing free access. Other authorities like Lancashire and Leicestershire, are in the process of considering such a policy. Some of the London boroughs have also adopted such a policy.

Muslim communities realise the importance of education for the new generation, since it they faces many intellectual challenges, especially now there are so many ideologies being marketed. The social, intellectual and political trends are more than can be counted, and the advocates of such ideologies use the latest means of seduction and promotion to spread them. The youth are targeted because they are most suggestible.

It is for this reason that all those who sincerely care about Muslim youth, as trustees of the future of the *Ummah*, should spare no effort in guiding them by instruction with correct Islamic concepts in providing them with the programmes and the environment that gives them the necessary Islamic knowledge, the right spiritual discipline

The local authority receives sympathetically applications from Muslim communities to use school accommodation free of charge between 4.00 pm and 5.30 pm, on week days, generally during term time. The aim of the Muslims community is to broaden the children's education, including social, religious and cultural objectives. Much of the time is devoted to language teaching and study of the *Qur'an* and the *Sunnah*.

Muslim youth in the west faces dangers that could cause them the loss of their Muslim identity or weaken their adherence to Islam. Some of these dangers are:

- 1- Competition between various sects that have originated in the East to win Muslim youth in the west
- 2- Projection of problems that face Islamic work in the East on to Islamic work in the West.
- 3- Lack of Islamic knowledge and absence of effective disciplinary guidance in Western societies.
- 4- Widespread unemployment and subjection to some of the ills of Western Society such as drug dealing.

Priorities Of Islamic Education

The fields of work are as many as there are gaps, but if we examine the dangers that face Muslim youth, some of which have already been mentioned, we can identify certain priorities and concentrate on them for a start. These priorities can be summed up as follows:

First: Teaching Islam to young people at an early age (before university): Teaching Islam to youth and instilling the principles of Islam into their hearts at home and at school is a very important factor in protecting them in this society. The pitfalls are many and may appear attractive, so the problem should be confronted with effective means that are also attractive. The following means can be employed:

- 1- The establishing of Islamic schools in areas of sizeable Muslim presence. If this is not possible, then the instituting of weekend schools that concentrate on discipline and repair the damage done by the non-Muslim environment.
- 2- The establishing of local clubs, which may serve as centres of education, discipline and guidance.
- 3- The holding of monthly small camps in the main European cities where there is a sizeable Muslim presence.
- 4- The increasing of awareness of Islamic discipline amongst parents by implementing simple programmes involving the family

Second: The upbringing of youth to have a correct understanding of Islam and to be propagators of its teachings. This requires the

availability of information that guarantees a right understanding of Islam, the provision of guidance for youth in adherence to Islamic behaviour and the generation of conviction in thought and practice, so that Islam can be preached as a comprehensive way of life. If this upbringing is to be available, it is imperative that Muslim organisations and agencies in the West receive the right preparation for such a role. This can be done by the following means:

- 1- Supporting youth and student organisations and Islamic centres in playing an active role in the upbringing and guidance of youth.
- 2- Provision of Islamic books and cassettes, especially those directed at youth.
- 3- Holding short courses, both educational and disciplinary for prospective leaders amongst the youth
- 4- Provision of scholarships for selected youth to study at Islamic universities, in order to prepare them for leadership. These scholarships should cover Arabic and Islamic studies.
- 5- Organising youth tours to Muslim countries, in order to allow them to get to know these countries, to visit the holy places and to perform

the *Hajj* and the *Umrah*. These tours should also help to create some sort of interaction between the youth and Muslim countries

TARGETS

It is paramount importance to make Muslim youth aware of the value of Islamic education and of that of observing the Islamic system of priorities. Success in these sphere is the criterion by which the effectiveness of the *Da'wah* may be assessed. These targets will remain unattended unless they are supported by a sincere and definite ambition to pursue the Islamic ideal. Additionally, one should not by any means ignore the role of a capable and qualified leader and teacher someone endowed with the ability to lead, teach and inspire. Such individuals should, moreover, be capable of implementing all the practical measures and activities that are required to meet the challenges of ideological and civilizational conflict. It is also important to have upright believers whose character and conduct are exemplary to provide the basis for practical training. It will no doubt, require much time and concerted collective effort and co-operation to improve the education and condition of Muslims in the West.

III.2- Elections and Muslim Participation in Britain

The equation of Muslim participation in British elections is a subject of hot debate among them

The role of Muslims in election is evident, as their number about two million in the whole country, representing the second larger religions grown.

On of the strong expectations of the 1997 was to have for the first time a Muslim member among the new members of parliament. The labourer party selected Muḥammad Sarwar, who is a Pakistani Muslim, as a candidate in a Scottish constituency.

In an interview with “*Al- SHARQ aL- AWSAT*”⁴ Muḥammad Sarwar stated that he was worried about the situation in parliament, which did not reflect the situation in the British community, with different cultures, origins and religions.

Sarwar regret the absence of any Islamic representation in the British parliament, in spite of there being more than two million Muslims in

⁴ No. 6692, Tuesday, 25th of March 1997

Britain. He stated that this subject was now of importance for all the political parties in Britain.

He was also worried about the poverty of Islamic representation in the House of Lords, in spite of there being many Muslims who could be selected for this House by the political parties.

According to *Sarwar*; the main obstacles to having Islamic representation in the British parliament is the anti-Islamic trend in the British community ; in spite of the large size of the Islamic population in Britain, the large political parties had not yet decided to select any Muslim for an election campaign. He acknowledges the decision of the Labours party to select him as a candidate in the election, stressing that he was planning to do his best to help the whole community he would represent, including the 8% Muslim population.

Regarding the participation of Muslims in elections; the Islamic Council for British Muslims in England instructed them to abstain. However, *Sarwar* stated that the active participation of Muslims in elections was the only way for them to be involved in public affairs and thus to protect their interest in Britain

In order to ascertain the opinions of the various Islamic organisations in Britain about the subject of participation in elections, *AL- SHARQ AL- AWSAT* discussed it with several Islamic leaders. *Zaki Badawi*, Head of the Council of Mosques and Mosque Leaders in England, stated that it was uncommon for the Council to have any comments on local or general elections, unless there was any specific subject of concern to them. He stated that a small group of Muslims had recently raised the point of abstention in of the elections, claiming that it was prohibited for Muslims to be involved in any political activities, and advising Muslims to avoid completely any participation in the British elections. He continued that an other group educated complete isolation for Muslims from the British community. However, he expressed his surprise at the attitudes of both groups, and at the contradiction between citizenship and isolation from the community.

He concluded that they must study their plans and programmes more clearly and properly. His advice and the advice of the council to all Muslims was that Islamic participation in elections was a religious and civil duty

Badawi stated that he was expecting a promising result in the election, not only for the whole community but also for Muslims, so that avoidance of participation in the election was not good for Islamic Affairs. He cited the famous datum of the Prophet *Muhammad* "He who is not concerned with the affairs of the Muslims cannot be considered as one of them."

Badawi supported his advice to Muslims to participate in the election with the Islamic value of *Shahādah* ; he stated that participation in elections was similar to *Shahādah*, which was obligatory according to Islamic guidance. He explained that the advice given by the Islamic Council was based upon the fact that commitment to the problems and interests of the community must be the key issue in selecting the most suitable person for membership of parliament.

Badawi stated that there was a dramatic expansion of discrimination in Europe and the U.S.A, racial and religious discrimination was affecting Arabs and Muslims more than any other groups. The council of Mosques was studying this problem through a research group called 'Islamophobia'; the Council emphasised the importance of passing a law for protecting Muslims, similar to that protecting the Jewish and

Sikh communities, pointing out that Judaism was a religion with adherence of different races, and that the Sikhs are not a single race. He was surprised that Muslims were not also covered by that protective law.

Badawi made the point that the law would not only protect the individual but would also create a suitable environment for educating the community about the respect due to all religious. He continued that Islam was against any religious discrimination, both here and in all Islamic Countries.

Badawi stated that Islam in Britain was not to be considered as a migrant religion of minor importance; it was actually now a national religion. The Muslims in Britain were committed to their religion as well as being committed to their country.

Regarding the possibility of having some seats for Muslims in parliament, his comment was that it would indicate progress, but that the most important thing was to have programmes and plans in the political groups aiming at giving Muslims their rights in the community, including all the different political, social and economic aspects. This

would be possible only with Islamic representation among the different political groups.

III.2.1- A Campaign For Avoidance

The Islamic Council in England is one of the Islamic organisations aiming at expressing the opinion of Muslims in England in a unified way. However, their opinion is not compatible with the opinions of most other Muslims regarding the issue of Islamic participation in the election in England.

Ghiyāth al- Dīn Sadīqī, head of the Islamic Council in England stated that the Council was emphasising avoidance of the next election. His campaign was for Muslims to avoid the election, as according to experience with previous elections, the Muslims did not gain any benefits. His advice was that their participation must be organised on a group basis rather than on an individual basis, in order to be strong enough for negotiations with all the political groups.

About the effect of this suggested system on politics, separated from the official channels and organisations, *Sadīqī* stated that it might take a longer time to prove significant but that it would become so after more than one election. *Sadīqī* stated that the situation of Muslims would

become worse, since the present system of election did not put pressure on the political groups. *Sadīqī* considered himself one of those aiming at organising a system of group election strong enough to confront the political groups.

He stated that Muslims must have their own elective force to enable them to be effective in the political affairs of Britain. He gave many examples of power group organisations and how they had become effective, such as Human rights organisation.

Regarding the possibility of Sarwar's winning, *Sadīqī* was reserving judgement, stating that his winning a seat in the parliament was not guaranteed. His failure would be bad for Muslims, but even if he won the seat, his commitment would not be only for Muslims, he would be committed to the program of his political group. so far the impression Serwar gives as a Muslim in the parliament is not satisfactory.

The vice - president of the Islamic Council, Gehangez Muḥammed, defended the opinion of the Council regarding the avoidance of elections, stating that the programmes of the political groups were lacking in any specifically Islamic issue, and that the leaders of the political groups were unaware of Islamic affairs and of the importance

of passing a law to protect Muslims and to avoid religious discrimination in schools as well as to provide needed support for Islamic schools. *Gehangez* stated that Islamic representation inside the political groups was of minimal effect; he preferred to only on Islamic organisations, separated from official channels and organisations to be more effective. He stated that the avoidance policy, implementing by the Islamic council will not isolate Muslims but it is the best step forward to the future for the future. He emphasised the importance of Islamic votes in any election; he expected that abstention by Muslims in the 1997 election would affect the results in 20 seats at least. He stated that unplanned Islamic participation in elections for the previous 30 years had brought them no benefits. He emphasised the importance of the planned Islamic participation in the next election.

According to him, British politicians were managing Islamic affairs in different ways, reflecting the more powerful situation of Muslims in Britain and their awareness of their rights.

III.2.2- Pressure Groups

Contrary to the claims of the Islamic Council in England, that they represent all Muslims in Britain and express their different opinions,

there are many other different Islamic organisations working as prominent pressure groups without representing the unified opinion of British Muslims. One of these organisations is the “United Kingdom ASIA” (Working Group for Islamic Affairs in England), which recently published a report on the election under the title “*1997 Election and British Muslims towards fair and sympathetic society*”.

Iqbal Sacranī, the authorised speaker of the organisation stated that this report had been accepted by the government and the opposition, who agreed that something need to be done to increase Muslim representation in parliament. Sacranī was more concerned about Islamic representation in the Council of Lords, since the political groups select their members without election. He continued that other minority groups of the population had their representatives in the Council of Lords such as Hindus and Africans. He emphasised the importance of selecting Muslim representatives in the Council of Lords, since the minimisation of their role there can only be explained by something other than the size of their population. He stressed the importance of being well organised as Muslims in order to select suitable representatives for that House.

His opinion of the political groups is that labour is worse than the Conservatives, since they did not give Muslims any benefits in spite of having the votes of many Muslims in the election.

Sacranī was worried the about selecting of some Islamic names by the Government as members of the Council of Lords, without consideration of their position and effectiveness among Muslims the simple selection of some Islamic names may not be compatible with the needs of the Muslims.

The Union of Islamic Societies in England and Ireland, founded in 1977, was the first step to introducing Islamic organisations into the British textile system. The General Secretary of the Union, Said Aziz Basha, stated that the Union represented two million Muslim. The system of the Union is that the members of the annual conference select their representative committee in a democratic way.

The Union policy in British elections over the last twelve years Aziz Basha Said, the Union is calling Muslims to discuss all Islamic subjects with their elected members of parliament, requesting their support and help without any discrimination.

The Islamic Union is concerned about passing a law prohibiting religious discrimination, beside the present one prohibiting racial discrimination. Basha states that the Union is the only organisation negotiating with the British government, and that it is the only organisation having communication with different departments in the government.

The government accepted the opinion of the Islamic Union regarding many issues such as *Halāl* meat, Islamic dress for schoolgirls, and the right of Muslims to practice their religious duties , such as prayer and fasting, while of work.

Aziz Basha is still negotiating with the British government to have representatives of Muslims among the members of the Council of Lords.

He is optimistic on this point, stating that it seems to be possible in the near future. However, he points out other obstacles which may affect the smooth relations between the Union and the British government, such as extreme organisations having decisive policies, which is unacceptable to the government.

He confirms that the Islamic Union is a neutral organisation with balanced policies based upon implementation of the rules of Islam, and that the Union is concerned to give a good impression of Islam.

Aziz Basha does not accept the policy of the Islamic Council; his opinion is that Muslims, as comprising part of the community should not isolate themselves from that community. They must play their role in it and negotiate for their rights in a democratic way.

III.2.3- Opinion of The Islamic Centre

Hamad Al- Majed, the general director of the Islamic Centre in London states that only a few groups of Muslims in Britain are against Islamic participation in the election, those who are against participation in elections claim that the British government, with all related organisations, administrations and groups are not Islamic bodies, hence the importance of not involving themselves, as Muslims, in a non - Islamic system. Their opinion is that they must avoid elections completely.

Al- Majed divides this group of Muslims into two subdivisions; the first one is logical and expresses its opinion in a logical way.

The second subdivision expresses its opinion in a different way, through propaganda and the mass media, without paying any attention to the possible impressions that this gives other people of Muslims and Islam.

His opinion, on a personal level, is similar to that of most other members of the Islamic Centre and other Islamic organisations in Britain, considering the importance of balancing the advantages and disadvantages of participation in elections. He states that this issue should not be dealt with unreflectingly from the Islamic point of view. He supports the idea of the importance of Islamic participation in elections, without being afflicted to one particular political party; however, Muslims must work together to advance their ideas for Islamic Education and non-discrimination. Al- Majed raises the point that Muslims having British nationality and the right to vote are more than one and half millions, a figure higher than that of Jew in Britain; however, their effectiveness is much different.

He emphasis the importance of close co-operation between all Muslims in Britain, avoiding any side problems or unimportant discussions. The issue of participation in elections must not affect co-operation between Muslims.

The general director of the Islamic Centre stated that the visit of Tony Blair to the Centre did not mean that the centre is supported the labour party; it was simply because Blair informed the centre of his visit and it accordingly welcomed him.

The most important issue from the view of the Islamic Centre, according to Al- Majed, is that politicians in England must be aware of the situation of Muslims in Britain.

To those who criticised the Centre for welcoming Blair Al-Majed said that he a waited similar visits from the Prime Minister, John Major, and the leader of the Liberal Democrat, Paddy Ashdown, both of whom he would be pleased to welcome.

III.2.4- Participation In Elections

Ahmed Faris: chief editor of Muslims News, stated that he did not think many Muslims would vote in the election. According to him the political parties sill did understand the rights of Muslims. His opinion was compatible with that of the Islamic Council regarding the 1997 election. He stated that their campaign for avoidance was an expression of their opinion.

Avoidance of participation might affect the results of the election, especially in regions in which voting was exercise almost equal.

He thought that most Muslims were still afraid of the British political system; according to him, they must be strong enough to be able to change what they need to change.

On the other hand, a recently published report, made by the Runymede Committee for planning and research, pointed to anti-Islamic tendencies in man media and their reflections upon the British community.

This report discusses various topics related to Muslims and Islam in Britain, with emphasis on the fear of Islam. It states that this fear affects integration into the British community; this again affects Muslims, rights and keeps them from leadership positions of leadership the community. This may explain to some extent the failure of Muslims to be members of parliament or of the House of Lords.

III.2.5- Views of the Political Parties

An authorised speaker for the Conservatives stated that important issues for Muslims were discussed, and that names of Muslims put forward for selection as candidates were relatively plentiful, as some suggested were names of non-Muslims aware of Muslim opinion. He denied any tendency among the Conservatives to exclude any Muslim from the names put forward.

In regions with a majority of Muslims, any non-Muslim elected would represent the Muslims and express their opinions in parliament.

The view of the Labour Party quite different; the name of Mr. Muḥammad Sarwar was put forward for the constituency of Paslick East, which seemed to be a guaranteed seat. The view of the Labour Party, as stated by an authorised some is that they were concerned about representing all people with different racial backgrounds. Their authorised spokesman stressed their policy was committed to representing all groups, including minority ethnic groups, such as Muslims, Jews Hindus and Sikhs.

The policy of the Labour Party is to give equal opportunities to all people to contest seats in parliament, reflecting the demographic

characters of the community. The other political parties do not have the same policy. In the mean time, only a few members represent minority ethnic groups in parliament. However Labour policy is that the numbers of those members should be increased to 30. Labour expected 7 to 9 new members in the next parliament to represent minority ethnic groups.

The Liberal Democratic agreed with the policy of Labour of giving equal opportunities to all, without paying any attention to their racial background. An authorised official of the Liberal Democratic stated that they encouraged the representation of all groups, including Muslims, Africans and Asians.

III.2.6- Ambitions

The effect of the Islamic vote is still far from commensurate with its size, for many reasons. Among the most important of there is the fragmentation of Muslims into different groups and organisations. The presence of an Islamic representation in Parliament has thus been delayed. In spite of the weak effect of Islam on the political environment in Britain, there are still indications of the awareness of

Muslims of the importance of their participation in elections and of their involvement in political activities.

The different political parties become more aware of the value of the Islamic vote and are planning to solicit its support it. However, the number of names of Muslims put forward by the various parties is still not compatible with the number of Muslims among the British community.

British Muslims must participate more actively in political matters, with stronger organisation, and must do their best to form a strong pressure group for their own benefit.

II.2.7- The Structure of Participation

In the United Kingdom, Muslims have realised that in order to wield some control they will have to exercise political power. In July 1989 they started a political party, the Islamic Party of the United Kingdom (IPB) the objectives of which are as follows:-

1. To present issues of political and social importance to the British people in the light of the divine guidance of the *Qur'ān* and Sunnah.

2. To present a viable political economical and social alternative to the British people.
3. To lobby for political support from the political parties and the government for the needs of the Muslim people.
4. To defend the rights of Muslims throughout the Muslim world and to establish solidarity with Muslim countries and with other Muslim communities living under non-Muslim rule.

The IPB has been criticised by a number of Muslims on different grounds. The most significant things that they have secured for the Muslims is the availability of *Ḥalāl* meat and the establishment of some Islamic schools. Zaki Badawi of the Council of Imāms and Mosques observed that the party was run by converts, with few roots in doctrine and jurisprudence. Syed Pasha of the Union of Muslim Organisations thought that the party was counterproductive and that the Muslims could be represented better through the existing parties. Muslim community leaders had to think clearly on the issue of political participation as to whether the community should direct itself towards its own marginalisation or should penetrate the main-stream political parties. A number of constituencies in the United Kingdom have a high percentage

of Muslim voters, e.g. in Sparkbrook and Small Heath constituencies in Birmingham, in the West and North constituencies of Bradford, in Luton south and in Bethnal Green.

The number of Muslim voters will increase by 1998, as the younger generation reaches voting age. The Muslim community has not yet learned how to approach the British political system. It lacks the political experience attained by other communities such as the Jews. The concentration of the members of the Muslim community in politics is limited. It is mainly from the business and professional elites. Most of there are secular and, as such, have not been able to wield any influence.

The main reason is that they have limited political training and skills.

Political participation is essential for the survival of Muslims in the United Kingdom Training within the political arena and community institutions is necessary, and as yet Muslims are lacking in both. Muslim politics have been more internally focused. The politics of the Muslim community is like feudal politics reflecting the political culture of the Muslims countries of origin.

The most important issues that need to be addressed are the following:

1. The formation of Muslim pressure groups and organisations with a view to engaging in organised lobbying.
2. The formation of specialised agencies by Muslims in specialised areas such as futuristic studies and the polling of Muslim opinions.
3. The combination between the Holy *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* upon which the Muslims can find solutions for all their problems.
4. The direction of part of the *Da'wah* effort towards politics.
5. The performance of the Muslim in politics need to be an example in practice and fulfil his methodology, and behaves as a Muslim.

III.3- Local and national government with the Muslim Minority

The power of local and national government has had a significant impact on Muslim participation and influence in the institutions of power⁵.

Successful efforts have been made by many Muslim leaders to influence local government, especially in the field of education. This can be

⁵ *Nielsen , J. S., “ Muslims in The U.K. and Local Authority Responses”, Mansell Publishing Limited. np, 1988, p. 53; where he mention a number of practical problems facing Muslims that have been sorted out with different degrees of satisfaction*

exemplified by the Bradford Council for Mosques and the Birmingham Muslim Liaison Committee. On a local level it has been possible for councils to identify people who carried real authority within the Muslim community and then do business with them. Muslims have become councillors and mayors of several districts. Generally, but not exclusively, the chosen political party has been the Labour Party, with its traditional association with the working class and the underprivileged within society. As Muslims have become more financially successful, they are tending to appear amongst the ranks of the Conservative Party as well, which might be thought of as a more comfortable alliance than one with the “socialism” of the left.

The important challenge has been on the national level, where Muslims have yet to find their way into the institutions of the establishment such as the House of Commons. The general election of 1997 has seen the first Muslim elected as a member of parliament. Elections also raise the possibility of a Muslim woman candidate being proposed, since the Labour Party has a policy of positive discrimination for women. However, Islam does not allow the woman to declare herself for candidacy, for many reasons, amongst them that *Sharī'ah* has instructed

her not to do so; the basic rule of the Muslim woman is not in public light but in the home.

The issue of racism in politics was recently raised both in connection with the Labour Party in Manchester Gorton and with the Conservatives in Birmingham Small Heath. The likelihood is that the first MPs will come under significant pressure to deliver a Muslim agenda, and that consequently this will raise the question of a division of loyalties between party and religious community. This is a dilemma which is still rehearsed frequently with local councillors. Muḥammad Sarwar, MP for Glasgow Parlick East and the United Kingdom's first Muslim MP, has already taken up a position in stating that he will adhere sincerely to principles of the Labour Party, regardless of his religion.

In order to deal with central government, the Muslim voice must be united. This is another concern which was addressed by the formation of the Muslim Parliament. However, there are several other contenders for the role of " Muslim Spokesman " at a national level. This was a major point in a recent statement by the Home Secretary, who stuck to the well-trodden principle of " divide and rule" whereby he said that he could not deal until there was a united voice and then proceeded to find

Muslims to support whatever policy he favoured In Islam. Muslims should be united all the time. There is a need for a genuine will on the part of central government to transfer some power to a national Muslim body so that they can be seen to be representative and to deliver something for Muslims, especially if we know that other minorities have achieved some of their targets in this way.

III.4- Racism And The Social Ills

Race relations has always been a barometer which responds to other pressures within society. In times of crisis there is a desire for a scapegoat, for some one to blame for all society's ills.

Throughout the history of Europe it has often been the Jews who fulfilled this role⁶ However, since the 1939-1945 war, the increased number of coloured immigrants has become the focus of hatred during difficult times. Such is the context of racism in the contemporary United Kingdom.. Many of the social ills focus on unemployment, which in itself contributes further to lowering the self-perception of Muslims.

⁶ See for more details *Nwyhā jāj, Brwtwkwlat Hwkama' Shywn*. Beirut 1990, p. 229.

The effect of recession on British industry has meant higher levels of unemployment, a lack of investment in infrastructure and housing and a growing gulf between rich and poor. This has always been the breeding ground for fascism and right-wing political groupings, and over the last fifteen years we have witnessed the expansion of the National Front and The British National Party. This is the organised face of white racism today. The targets of such racism are those who can be identified⁷ as being different and thus making demands on the system which necessarily mean there is less for others to share.

Hence the increase in racial attacks on Bangladeshis in the East End of London, for example, where there is massive unemployment and an unfulfilled demand for housing.

In 1993 in the East End of London, initial self-report questionnaires completed by the students established that the incidence of violence and

⁷ In accordance with the 1985 Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition of the racial incidences as: "Any incident in which it appears to the repeating or investigating officer that the complaint involves an element of racial motivation; or any incident which includes an allegation of racial motivation made by any person". In 1995/1996, 12,222 racial incidents were recorded by the police. These included incidents of verbal abuse and threatening behaviour, assault and property damage. The response to these incidents particularly incidents of repeat, low-level victimisation - can influence not only the behaviour of the perpetrators concerned, but also the behaviour of potential perpetrators in that area.

anti-social behaviour were high both in the schools and surrounding areas, that Bengali and black students appeared to be disproportionately victimised, and that students usually lacked the confidence to report bullying incidents. The results from follow-up questionnaire showed that in two years the levels of bullying has decreased in three of the schools and remained about the same in the London secondary school.

The prime target for racial attacks in the East End and other parts of the country is the identifiable minority “Asians”. The scale of such attacks is open to various estimates but all agree that it is much more widespread than the official figures reveal. Whereas an earlier generation might have remained passive and “avoided trouble”, a significant phenomenon of the current time is the rise of “Asian gangs” who are prepared to defend themselves and retaliate against any perceived threat. It is a short step from this for such gangs to become the instigators of trouble.

Partly this is a simple xenophobia based on people of a different culture and language. This makes Asian groups more vulnerable in the longer term than Afro - Caribbean, who at least share a common language and religion with the white population.

There are some claims that Muslims are doubly disadvantaged on account of both their colour and their religion. Undoubtedly there is some truth in this, as there is a tendency to equate Islam and Muslims with the words: “fundamentalist”, “terrorist” and “subversive”. Events in the Muslim world have an impact on the perception of Muslims in the United Kingdom. and fuel fears of the Muslims who are seen as a “rather dangerous people”.

This perception is compounded by Muslims self-perception. The once proud image of Islam, and Muslims in the United Kingdom, especially the young, feel the need to demonstrate their personal worth and increase their self-esteem. The impact of the Bosnian crisis on this situation cannot be over-estimated. Many Muslims in the United Kingdom. see this as the result of being assimilated into Europe and the settling of half-forgotten arguments. It has made many young Muslims feel that they must stand up for themselves or face being attacked like the Bosnians. When this is coupled with the rise of fascism and overt racism in Europe, often directed against the Muslim Turks of Germany and the Muslim Moroccans of France, the feeling of being under siege is strengthened.

Moves to combat racism have been successful on the overt level, which was witnessed in the 50s and 60s, but institutional racism is much harder to eradicate. It is in this light that the denial of Muslim schools and disparity in housing allocation is often viewed. Demands for a law against religious discrimination, along the lines of that which operates in Northern Ireland, have been made by Muslims but have met with little support from the government, although the CRE has been commissioned to gather evidence of religious discrimination in the United Kingdom. The difficulty is that such cases cannot be proved because they cannot be brought to law.

It is possible that such a law will be framed but the problems of implementation will then arise. Racial attacks are already commonplace in parts of London and they are expected to increase⁸. Only by addressing the underlying social evils of unemployment, bad housing, class division and inner-city inequality will there be any progress. There is little indication of this coming about under the present administration and so the future must be regarded as bleak for the time being. One

⁸ The international news, Thursday 26th of March 1998, issue 28

thing is sure, the younger generation of “coloured”, especially “Asian” youth will not become quietist victims; they will resist.

III.5- The Established and Variables in Islam.

It is necessary to know the established and the variables in Islam. Each one of these has its own peculiarities. They are not by any means interchangeable.

Foremost examples of those things which are established in Islam are faith and belief in the Oneness of *Allāh*, in His Prophets, in His angels and in His Books.

Likewise the morals of Islam are absolute and unchangeable. These include truthfulness, trust, sincerity, chastity, modesty, support for the weak and underprivileged and avoidance of oppression.

The tenets of the Divine law (*Sharī‘ah*) are also well established and permanent in Islam. This principle applies both to divinely fixed punishments (*Hudūd*) or legislation for the affairs of the *Ummah*.

The variables in Islam

The variables in Islam include means of transport such as cars, aeroplanes, and the usage of microphones and other modern methods of communication. These are all subject to change and development and there is no harm in using them to advance the propagation of Islam and to raise mankind's standard of living. Thus it is not possible that one should confine oneself to the means of transport that were present at the time of the Prophet. Any such claims would amount to a gross misunderstanding of the nature of Islam.

Among the variables in Islam are the rules of implementing juridical laws. For this will be done according to the legal advantages as determined by the Muslim ruler (*khalifah*). An example of this was witnessed when the punishment of cutting off the hands of thieves was suspended by *Umar Ibn al- Khaṭṭāb* during the famous famine which struck *Madīnah* during his rule. At that time many people died of starvation. The punishment of cutting off the hands of thieves was therefore suspended because of the prevailing circumstances. It was in fact felt that the implementation of the *Hadd* punishment would have been contrary to the spirit of compassion which Islam encourages.

Another example of a variable is the acceptance of three pronouncements of divorce on one occasion. This is in order to fulfil the legal rule that divorce should be approached gradually and not hastily. it was in this context that *Umar Ibn al- Khaṭṭāb* once said; “I have seen people hurrying to do something which *Allāh* made it possible for them to approach gradually. I therefore think it would be better that they should be forced to observe this rule of approaching divorce cautiously.”

It is obligatory that Muslims in general and those who propagate Islam in particular should conduct their affairs with non-Muslims with justice, trust and tolerance, but that no compromise should be made under any circumstances in so far as it relates to belief in *Allāh* and His Unity.

**CHAPTER
FOUR**

**THE METHOD OF LEGISLATION IN
ISLAM AND DA'WAH IN THE UNITED
KINGDOM**

IV.1- The First Stage - Makkah-Madīnah

There was a gradual development and the period during which sections of the *Qur'ān* were continuously revealed to the Prophet, from the beginning of his Prophet hood¹ in the year 609 C.E until shortly before his death in 632 C.E.- a period of approximately twenty-three years.

The various sections of the *Qur'ān* were generally revealed to solve the problems which confronted the Prophet and his followers in both *Makkah* and *Madīnah*². A number of *Qur'ānic* verses are direct answers to questions raised by Muslims and non-Muslims. Many of these verses in fact start with the phrase "They ask you about...." For example :-

"They ask you concerning menstruation. Say: that is Adhā, therefore keep away from woman during menses."

(2:222)

¹ *al- Khaṭīb, Muḥammad Ḥajjāj, al-Sunnah qabl al-Tadwīm*, Beirut 1980, pp. 249-255.

² *Maṣṣī, Jamīl, Tarīkh al-Dāwah al-Islāmīyah fī Zaman al- Rasūl Ṣalla Allāh 'Alīhī Wa Sallam wa al- Khūlafa' al- Rāshidīn*, pp. 115-271, Riyadh 1987. See: *Zaydān , 'Abd al-Karīm, Uṣūl al- Da'wah*, Baghdad 1992. and see also: *al- Zuḥaylī, Wahbah, Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islamī*, vol. 1, Damascus 1986, pp. 420-495.

The same was the case with Islamic legislation found in the *Sunnah*, much of which was either the result of answers to questions, or pronouncements made at the time that incidents took place .

For example, on one occasion, one of the Prophet's companions asked him, Oh Messenger of *Allāh*, we sail the seas and if we perform *Wuḍū'* with our fresh water we will go thirsty. Can we perform *Wuḍū'* with sea water ?. He replied, 'Its water is pure and its dead (sea creatures) are *Ḥalāl*³'.

The wisdom behind this method of legislation was to achieve gradation in the enactment of laws. As this approach was easily acceptable and closer to logic, the people morally appreciated and understood the solution of their problems when they felt them. They might not realise or be able to comprehend the wisdom or reason behind the solution if they were asked to anticipate or imagine a problem, difficulty or situation where the given solution would be very useful and a source of relief.

This method also suits the nature of man which prefers freedom of thought and action unless he is made to realise that to follow certain

³ Collected by *at-Tirmidhī, an-Nasā'ī, Ibn Mājah and abī Dāwūd, Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, p. 22, no. 38, authenticated by al-Bānī in *Ṣaḥīḥ Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1st ed, Vol. 1, No. 76, Beirut 1988, p.19.

procedures and ways in a particular situation will benefit him. This could not have been done in a better way than the way *Allāh* adopted. It also made it easier for man to learn and understand the laws since the reasons and context of the legislation would be known to him.

This method of gradual legislation needs to be followed and practised in *Da'wah* in the west both with Muslims and with non-Muslims.

I could properly say that no one is able to enact and implement all of the Islamic Legislation, However, we have priorities in Islam, for example for Muslims, the priorities are the five duties in Islam; therefore it is important to follow the method of legislation in Islam and try to implement it as much as possible in order to avoid mistakes.

IV.1.1- The Makkan Period (609-622 C.E.)

This period starts with the beginning of the prophethood in *Makkah* and ends with the Prophet's *Hijrah* to the city of *Madīnah*. The revelations of this period were mainly concerned with building the ideological foundation of Islam, *Imān*, in order to prepare the early band of converts for the difficult task of practically establishing the social order of Islam. Consequently, the following basic topics of the Medinan revelations all

reflect one aspect or another of principles designed to build faith in God.

1- Tawhīd

Most of the people of *Makkah* believed in a Supreme Being known by the name *Allāh* from the most ancient of times. However, they had added a host of gods who shared some of *Allāh*'s powers or acted as intermediaries. Accordingly, Medinan revelations declared *Allāh*'s unique unity and pointed out that gods besides *Allāh* were of no benefit⁴. Therefore the Muslim needs to start with *Tawhīd* in his da'wah in the west.

2- The Life Hereafter

Since there was no way for human beings to know about the next life, the Makkan revelations vividly described its wonders, its mysteries and its horrors. It is important for the *Dā'ī* to remind people about the next life, especially in such a secular society .

⁴ To propagate the fundamental Islamic message, the basic thing with which to begin is Tawhīd. in order to do this, naturally, we will have to face many difficulties, as it is the first step to Īmām. At present, it is not so difficult, since people are more educated and it is easy to were logic. But we have to be patient in giving Da'wah of Tawhīd as the Prophet's did.

3- Allāh's Existence

Some of the early verses present logical arguments proving the existence of God for the few Makkan who actually denied it. The *Dā'ī* needs to gather this evidence from the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah* as well as from the contemporary fields of science which support the Islamic concept of existence of God, for atheists, and for others who have doubt in their hearts..

4- The People of the Past

The Makkan verses often mention historical examples of earlier civilisations which were destroyed when they denied their obligation to God, like '*Ād* and *Thamūd*, in order to warn those who reject the message of Islam and to teach the believers about the greatness of *Allāh*. The *Dā'ī* needs during his *Da'wah* on occasions to remind the people who may reject the message of Islam in this way.

5- Ṣalāh

Because of the fundamental relationship between *Ṣalāh* and *Tawḥīd*, *Ṣalāh* was the only other pillar of Islam to be legislated in *Makkah*,

besides the declaration of faith. Therefore, directly after the acceptance of *Tawhīd*, the new Muslim needs to learn *Ṣalāh* and how to pray five times a day .

6- Challenges

In order to prove to the pagan Makkans that the *Qur'ān* was from God, some of the Makkan verses challenged the Arabs to produce even a small chapter or a verse similar to the *Qur'ān*. We need to reprise this challenge, because the miracle of the *Qur'ān* will remain till the Last Day.

IV.1.2- The Medinan Period (622-632 C.E.)

The *Hijrah* marks the beginning of this period and the death of the Prophet in 632 C.E. marks the end, After the Prophet's migration to *Madīnah* and the spread of Islam there, he was appointed as ruler, and the Muslim community became a fledgling state. Thus, revelation was concerned primarily with the organisation of the Muslim state. It was during this period that the majority of the social and economic laws of the *Sharī'ah* were revealed. Revelations during this period also strengthened the foundations of *Imān* and *Tawhīd*, which were

established during the Makkan period. However, most of the following basic topics of the Medinan revelations concentrate on the laws necessary for the development of an Islamic society.

1- Laws

It was during the Medinan period that the last three pillars of Islam, which are *Zakāt*, Fasting and *Hajj*, were revealed,. The punishments for adultery, murder and theft were also fixed.

2- People of the Book

In *Madīnah*, Muslims came in contact with Jews for the first time and with Christians on a large scale. Thus, a number of Medinan verses tackled questions which were raised by the Jews in order to befuddle the Prophet and discredit Islam. The verses also outlined laws concerning political alliances with Christians and Jews, as well as laws permitting marriage with them. From the *Sunnah* of the Prophet we learn of his behaviour with the People of the Book. Islamic propagation in the West is in great need of acquiring the knowledge of *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, especially in calling with wisdom, a good sermon and arguing in the best of manners.

IV.1.3- Qur'ānic Fields of Study

The body of information contained in the *Qur'ān*, as a whole, may be grouped under three general heading, with regard to the fields of legislation to which they are related :

First : Information related to Belief in God, His angels, His scriptures, His Prophets, and the affairs of the next life, These topics are covered within the field of study known as theology.

Second : Information related to matters of the heart and soul, and moral principles and rules of conduct aimed at the development of nobility of character, These areas represent the field of moral science known as ethic.

Third : Information related to legal details and contained within a body of commandments, prohibitions and choices. This group represents the field of *Fiqh*

In all, these three represent the main areas on which Islamic propagation should always concentrate; the correct propagation of Islam cannot become manifest without these three fundamental aspects.

Nevertheless, the number of obligatory practices is, quite small in proportion to that which were abrogated. Furthermore, even the few that

where remained obligatory where not kept in their existing form. Only their basis foundation remained untouched for example Ṣalāh-Jihad

In order for Islamic legislation to achieve its goal, it has enacted a series of legal commandments and prohibitions which make up the rules of conduct governing the social system of Islam. However, this enactment of laws, the *Qur'ānic* revelations have taken into consideration the following four basic principles, Which are important for the *dā'ī* in his *da'wah* :

1. The Removal of Difficulty

For the *dā'ī* that the first thing to be considered is how make Islam as easy as possible for people. The system of Islam has been revealed for their benefit. It provides them with guidance in all walks of life, in order to ensure for them a righteous lifestyle within a just society, committed to the service of God. Islamic laws are not meant to be a burden, creating difficulties for people, in order for them to grow spiritually, as some systems, communism for example, may claim. They are designed to facilitate the provision of mankind's individual and societal needs.

As such, among the basis on which Islamic law is rest is the removal of unnecessary difficulties wherever possible. Evidence to support this can

be found throughout the *Qur'ān*. The following verses are only few examples :

“Allāh burdens not a person beyond his scope”

(2:286)

“Allāh intends for you ease, and he does not wish difficulty for you”

(2:185)

The Prophet , who was the prime example of how Islamic law was to be implemented, was himself described as always choosing the easier path whenever a choice was given to him between two possible paths, as long as the easier path was not sinful⁵. The Prophet was also reported to have said to some of his followers on the occasion of their dispatching as governors of Yemen, “ Make things easy (for the people) and do not make them difficult ⁶“

⁵ Reported by ‘Aisha and collected by;

al- Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al- Bukhārī*, Arabic-English, vol. 4, no. 760, Beirut nd, P. 491, *Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Trans. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī, vol. 4, no. 5752, Lahore 1976, p. 1246, and *Abī Dāwūd*, *Ṣunan Abī Dāwūd*, English Trans., vol. 3, no. 4767, nd np, p. 1341.

⁶ Reported by Abū Burdah and collected by *al- Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ al- Bukhārī*, Arabic-English, vol. 5, no. 630. nd np, p. 4413. *Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, no. 4298, nd np, p. 944, and *Muslim* also collected it from *Abū Mūsā*, no. 4292, and *Anas Ibn Mālik* , no. 4300.

Islamic legal scholars unanimously consider this concept an indisputable fundamental principle followed by God in the enactment of Laws. Consequently, in their implementation of the divine laws, they have deduced many secondary laws on this basis⁷.

2. The Reduction of Religious Obligations

A natural consequence of the previous principle is that the total number of legal obligations should be relatively few lawful things are permitted either specifically or by the absence of any prohibitions. This principle can be clearly seen in the method by which the *Qur'ān* deals with prohibition

and permission. In the case of prohibitions, the sub-categories are named and listed, while in the case of permission, a general licence is given, owing to the great number of categories included in it,

for example, with regard to women with whom marriage is forbidden, *Allāh* states,

“ Prohibited to you are your mothers, your daughters, your sister and your aunts...” (4:23) and see (5:3)

⁷ Zaydān, 'Abd al-Karīm, *Tārīkh al- Tashrī' al- Islāmī*, np nd, pp.19-20.

“ Except those whom your right hand possess. Thus Allah ordained for you. All others are lawful, provided you seek them in marriage with Mahar from your property, desiring chastity, not committing illegal sexual intercourse...”

(4:24)

3. The Realisation of Public Welfare

Because the laws of Islam were primarily enacted for the general good of all mankind, the Prophet was a universal Prophet sent to all people, till the end of time. *Allāh* states this in the *Qur'ān* in no uncertain terms :

“We have not sent you except as a giver of glad tidings and a Warner to all mankind, but most of men know not.”

(34:28)

“Say, Oh mankind! Verily, I am sent to you all as the messenger of Allāh..”

(7:158)

4. The Realisation of Universal Justice

Islamic legislation considers all humans the same, with regard to their obligation to submit to the divine laws, and their responsibility for breaking them. The laws mentioned in the *Qur'ān* are all general, making no distinction between one group and another

“Allāh enjoys Al-Adl and 'Al-Iḥsān ..”

(16:90)

“Verily! Allāh commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice...”

(4:58)

“Oh you who believe, stand out firmly for Allāh and be just witnesses and let not the enmity and hatred of other make you avoid justice. Be just: that is nearer to piety, and fear Allāh. Verily, Allāh is well-acquainted with what you do.”

(5:8)

We can use all these examples during our *Da'wah* in the west, particularly telling people about Justice in Islam.

During the era of the prophethood, a woman from the powerful tribe of *Makhzūm* stole some jewellery and confessed to the crime.

When the case was brought before the Prophet, her tribesmen wanted to avoid the shame of having the *Qur'ānic* punishment applied to her, so they asked *ʿUsāmah Ibn Zayd*, who was close to the Prophet, to intercede on her behalf. When *ʿUsāmah* approached the Prophet, he became very angry with him and said, “Do you dare to intercede in one of *Allāh's* fixed punishments?” He then called the people together and

delivered a sermon in which he said, "The people before you how were destroyed because they let the nobles go when they stole, but applied *Allāh's* fixed punishment to the weak when they stole. By *Allāh*, if my own daughter, *Faṭimah*, stole, I would cut off her hand⁸". This is the meaning of Justice in Islam, and that is really what the *Dā'ī* needs to tell people about.

IV.1.4- Da'wah Method

1. Islamic law in the early period consisted of the laws of the *Sharī'ah* which were revealed and recorded in the *Qur'ān* and the *Sunnah*. They relate mainly to the ideological foundation of Islam, *īmān*, and to socio-economic matters necessary for the organisation of the fledgling Muslim state.
2. The basis of legislation in the *Qur'ān* was that of human reformation. As such, beneficial human customs and practices were recognised and incorporated into the body of divine legislation. The *Dā'ī* will feel more comfortable during his *Da'wah* if he adopts this same basis.
3. In order to achieve the goal of reformation, *Qur'ānic*

⁸ *Muslim b. al-Ḥajjājī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 3, no. 4187, np nd, p. 109, and *Abū Dāwūd*, *Ṣunan Abū Dāwūd*, vol. 3, no. 4360, np nd, p. 1218.

legislation incorporated the principles of :

- a) Removal of difficulty. This is the duty of the *Dā'ī* in the west
- b) Reduction of religious obligations
- c) Realisation of public welfare. In order to call people to Islam.
- d) Realisation of universal justice and Islam is being intended for all humanity.

IV.2- The Second Stage - The Orthodox Caliphs

This stage represents the era of the Orthodox Caliphs and the major *Ṣaḥābah*. It extends from the caliphate of *Abū Bakr* (632-634CE) to the death of the fourth Caliph *ʿAlī* (661CE). The borders of the Islamic state were rapidly expanded during the first twenty years of this stage to include Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Iraq, and Persia. Thus, Muslims were suddenly brought into contact with totally new systems, cultures, and patterns of behaviour for which specific provision was not to be found in the laws of *Sharīʿah*. To deal with the numerous new problems, the Orthodox Caliphs relied heavily on decisions by consensus (*Ijmāʿ*) as well as *Ijtihād*, in which they had been trained by the Prophet, while they were with him after his migration to *Madīnah*. In the course of their extensive use of *Ijmāʿ* and *Ijtihād*, these caliphs established

procedures which later became the basis for legislation in Islam, that is *Fiqh*.

Now we have the question as to what the *dā'ī* should do if he encountered some new problem in the west?

In such cases we find examples of the *Ṣaḥābah* is attitude towards problems. Faced with a new problem, the *Sahābī* of this period would generally take the following steps, in order to solve it:

(1). He would first search for a specific ruling on the problem in the

Qur'ān.

(2). If he did not find the answer there , he would then search for a ruling on it in the *Sunnah*

(3). If he still did not find the answer, he would then call a meeting of the major *Ṣaḥābah* and try to get unanimous agreement on a solution to the problem. (This unanimity was referred to as *Ijmā'*.)

(4). If unanimity could not be arrived at, he would then take the position of the majority.

(5). If, however, differences were so great that no overwhelming majority opinion could be determined, the *Sahābī* would made his

own *Ijtihād*, which would then become law. It should also be noted that the caliph had the right to over-rule the consensus⁹

The Approach of Individual Ṣaḥābah to Ijtihād

In addition to formal meetings of the major *Ṣaḥābah* which were called by the caliphs for decision - making, there arose many day-to-day situations in which individual *Ṣaḥābah* were asked to make rulings. In such cases they tended to follow three general courses of action.

In the first place, *Ṣaḥābah* who were in decision-making positions made it clear that their deductions were not necessarily in accordance with as *Allāh* intention. For example, when *Ibn Mas'ūd* was questioned about the inheritance rights of a woman who had been married without a defined *Mahr*, he said, "I am giving my opinion about her, If it is correct, then it is from *Allāh*, but if it is incorrect, then it is from myself and Satan."¹⁰

Second, if they made different rulings on a problem in their individual capacities and were later informed of an authentic *Ḥadīth* on the subject, they would immediately accept it dropping all differences. For

⁹ *Al-Madkhal*, np nd. p.107

¹⁰ *Abū Dāwūd, Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, English Trans., vol.2, no. 2111, pp. 567.

example , after the Prophet's, death the *Ṣaḥābah* held different opinions as to where he should be buried. When *Abū Bakr* related to them that he had heard the Prophet say that Prophets are buried in the places where they die, they dropped their differences and dug his grave beneath his bed in the house of his wife 'Ā'ishah.

Third, when neither authentic proof nor unanimity could be arrived at, the companions of the Prophet used to respect the opinions of each other and would not force other *Ṣaḥābah* to follow any individual opinion. The only exception to this rule was if they found people following practices which, though formerly acceptable, had later been become prohibited. For example , *Mut'ah*, a pre-Islamic for of temporary marriage, which had been allowed in the early stages of Islam , was forbidden by the time of the Prophet's death. Some of the *Ṣaḥābah* were unaware of the prohibition and thus continued to practice temporary marriage, during *Abū Bakr's* caliphate and the first half of *Umar's* caliphate. When *Umar* became aware of this practice of *Mut'ah*, he forbade it and prescribed a severe punishment for the offence¹¹. In short, we can say that if we face any problem in the west during our

¹¹ *Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Eng. Trans. 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Ṣiddīqī, Lahore 1976, pp. 610-1.

Da'wah, then we should adopt and follow the same procedures and attitudes taken by the Companions; this will greatly reduce the possibilities of falling into error, dissension and division.

**CHAPTER
FIVE**

ISLAMIC EDUCATION ISSUES

The most hotly debated element¹ of community life amongst Muslims in the United Kingdom is Education². It can be divided into four divisions: first, Separate Muslim schools, which can be divided into the independent, grant maintained and voluntarily maintained; second, Muslim children in state schools; third, ways in which Muslim communities are planning to create schools supplementary to day-school provision; and fourth, Muslim students' progression to further and higher education. According to the Islamic school league 62 schools registered till 1998.

There is still a variety of attitudes towards the whole issue of separate Muslim schools . There are some Muslims who see this as the only way in which their children can be protected from the pressures of what they perceive to be a secularist society³. This often comes through in terms of parents seeking to have their girls educated in institutions which protect

¹ See the Guardian Scotland, Nov. 8th 1994, Guardian Education.

² *McDermott, M. Y., The Muslim Guide*, London, 1986, page 43.

³ *Raza, Muḥammed S, Islam in Britain. Past, Present and Future*, 2nd Edition, Leicester 1993, page 42.

their honour and reputation, so that they can make “good” marriages for them later . There is less concern about educating boys separately. On the other hand, there are many Muslims who would not want their children to go to a separate Muslim school under any circumstances . These are who see education as microcosm and preparation for their later life; later on every one has to live in a mixed society and so children might just as well learn to cope with this from the beginning. Further, integrated education is a sign of belonging and such parents would want to stress that they belong within an integrated , multi-faith society.

Many Muslims parents, are unaware of the content of school assemblies or acts of collective worship; as a result, the decision to allow children to attend such sessions or not is made more in ignorance than with clear understanding of what the school is offering.

The 1988 Education Reform Act makes it clear that schools must provide every pupil in attendance with a daily act of collective worship, the majority of which in any term should be wholly or mainly of broadly Christian character. This Act put into legal terms what was already general practice in some areas; i.e. in most cases, the religious aspect of school assemblies involves singing Christian hymns and are,

therefore, Christian in essence. These assemblies are an integral part of school life aiming to develop unity and a family-like atmosphere with religious awareness.

There is still a considerable element of class distinction which is at play in the question of separate schools . Whatever their personal origins , Muslims who have made substantial amounts of money and have entered the professional and upper middle classes are as likely to want to buy a good education for their children as any one else. Such families are well represented in the independent “public” schools in the country . There are signs that Muslims are making their way up the social ladder in the same way as other immigrant communities have in the past. There is a real fear that in certain parts of inner cities, Muslims from Asian families are becoming an underclass who find work, good housing and good education closed to them. It is in such areas that the undifferentiated call for Muslim schools is likely to be strongest.

The independent Muslim schools cater for around 1% of Muslim children . There must be divided into two groups: those which make a genuine attempt at educating children to make their way in the world, and those who take in children to “ protect their honour “ and generally do not equip them to compete in the market place after leaving school .

There are probably no more than about six of the former and there could be as many as twenty-five of the latter . The best of the former now have reasonable accommodation and a highly dedicated staff, of whom an increasing number are Muslim, although there are still several non-Muslims teaching in these establishments . They generally manage to provide the best of their children with creditable examination grades but operate only through the exemplary goodwill and dedication of teachers , community leaders and benefactors . The general fact is that none of these schools meet even half of their total costs from student fees alone . Amongst those schools which offer a lower level of education, it is common to have poor accommodation, as few as thirty students, spread over a wide age range , poorly qualified and equipped teachers and negligible resources. Ghulam Sarwar⁴ has this to say:- It is a strangely uncomfortable fact that even in schools with over 90% Muslim children on roll there are few, if any at all, Muslim headteachers and teaching /non-teaching staff. It is often said that this is due to a shortage of suitably-qualified people or it may be due to unconscious institutional / individual racism with the recruitment and selection procedures. In

⁴ *Sarwar, Ghulam, British Muslims and Schools*, London 1991, p. 23.

terms of preparing children to take a full and active part in society in the future , they are a disaster. Birmingham

Dāral Uloom is considered to be one of the specialised schools, in giving a modest general education combined with a “thorough” education in the religious sciences, with a view to producing the next generation of ‘*Ulamā*’, *Imāms* and madrasah teachers. Very little is really known of what goes on within these schools. Most information comes through hearsay and from encountering former students. There are at least five such boarding establishments which have significant numbers of students . Additionally, there are probably a few dozen of the larger mosques which run classes for a small number of boys. The standard of education offered is generally regarded as low. It is nearly always offered in Urdu-their mother language-, which many of the students do not fully understand, by teachers who know little or nothing of English or life in the United Kingdom. It would be hard to argue that this is an effective way of producing the religious leaders of the next generation. The lack of such leaders who have an extensive knowledge, combined with a genuine understanding of the realities of life in United Kingdom, must be regarded as one of the paramount concerns which has yet to be addressed. Those institutions which claim to have

addressed it, such as the *Muslim College* in London or the *Centre for Islamic Studies* in Lampeter, have made remarkably little impression.

Efforts to establish separate Muslim schools have looked at three major routes for them to be created, The independent schools have very little future unless they can create a stable financial basis. There is a limit to the length of time that the community can go on supporting such schools, and requests to join the assisted places scheme, by which the government would pay some of the students' fees. The few independent Muslim schools established in Britain have been struggling to obtain voluntary aided status, a right enshrined in the 1944 Education Act; as yet two schools have been successful. The Political and Educational Authorities have adopted a negative attitude towards these laudable attempts by the Muslim community to provide the education of their choice for their children which fully prepares them for life in Britain.

There are still some Muslims who speak of Local Education Authority controlled schools using the present legislation to opt-out into grant maintained status, but the requirements for keeping the ethos of the school the same and again the political uncertainty over all GM schools makes this an unlikely route. This leaves the original route to separate Muslim schools; voluntarily maintained status. There have been

applications for voluntarily aided schools for Muslims for the past twelve years. The *Islamia School* in Brent is the best-known example, and the current flagship is Feversham College (formerly Bradford Muslim Girls' School). It must be said that there is no educational reason why Islamia, at least, should not have VA status. There is a lack of political will to see maintained Muslim schools. The result of this is to fuel resentment amongst Muslims who see themselves as being denied a basic civil right. This has taken on a notoriety well beyond its real worth. If the government were to decide to allow Muslims VA schools immediately, there would probably be only a handful of them by the turn of the century. The Muslim community simply could not staff or manage the "hundreds" of schools about which it talks.

It is also important to realise the power of the politics which are at play. fame will fall on the man who first succeeds in winning approval, hence the centrality of big players in Muslim politics like Brent, East London School and Bradford. It is in their interests and in the interests of self-styled Muslim educationalists to claim that there are "hundreds of thousands" of Muslim children waiting to be educated in such separate Muslim schools. If one wants to succeed in United Kingdom Muslim politics, it is necessary to have a high profile on education.

In local schools, where 99% of Muslim children are educated, there are five main areas of concern. Currently the most controversial issue is sex education⁵. The law requires that all schools deliver sex education but gives parents the right to know and influence what is taught. Ultimately, parents can withdraw their children from all sex education,⁶ except for the basic biological facts which are part of the science curriculum.

There is a fear amongst Muslims that such sex education is not delivered within a “moral framework”, in other words it is “value free” whereby one presents the information and allows the children to make up their minds on how they will live their lives; this I think is not necessary for this age group. There is some truth behind this assertion, in that teachers, and society in general, do not have a clear moral framework within which to work which is agreed by a majority. Part of the Muslim agenda here is to assert moral absolutes such as that homosexuality, sex outside marriage and abortion are totally prohibited for Muslims who regard them as deeply sinful. Research evidence would tend to indicate that young Muslims brought up in this country

⁵ See for more details *Sarwar, Ghulam, British Muslims and Schools*, London 1991, p. 10

⁶ *Mawdūdī, Abū al- A'īn, Towards Understanding Islam*, London, nd, Translated and edited by Khurshīd Ahmad, Page 90.

are not so accepting of these absolutes as their elders would desire. The issue of sex education raises again the inadequacy of many subcontinental Muslim parents to play their full role in educating their children. If the schools do not do it then the likelihood is that it will not be done or will be done in a sketchy manner.

The requirement for daily collective worship in schools, stressed by the law 1988 ERA, Education Perform Act, has allowed Muslims to see an opportunity of insisting that schools allow Islamic worship. Again there is a distinction between “leaders”, who wish to assert themselves in this way, and “ordinary parents”, many of whom do not want their children singled out from the rest of the school and perhaps do not wish them to come too closely under the influence of the “leaders” . There have been several cases of schools with Muslim majorities obtaining determinations from Local Education Authority Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education to permit Islamic worship. The great problem is that there are no guidelines from Muslim religious leaders to indicate how such acts might be performed in the school context, no resources to be used and no training given to prospective worship leaders .

One area of real concern is the number of children who come to school at age five with limited command of English. There are many social pressures on parents to ensure that their children retain the community language, and indeed many women from subcontinental families are unable to communicate in any other. Clearly, a child who comes to school with very little English is going to start at a disadvantage, particularly if there are several in the same situation so that socially the community language is continuously used at home and in the playground. This issue is not being addressed by Muslims in general either as it affects children or in relation to the number of women who remain unable to communicate in English, often because their husbands do not wish it .

Fluent, English-speaking Bangladeshi Students left school this year with more GCSE's, at the higher grades, than the national average. This is despite the community having many recognised educational and social disadvantage such as low English fluency, low reading ability, special educational needs, being eligible for free school meals, having extended leave from school or having less than 5 years in education researchers in Tower Hamlets, East London, which has the U.K's highest Bangladeshi concentration, have shown, in their report: "Analysis of the 1997 GCSE

results by pupil background factor's, that the average scores for Bangladeshi pupils have doubled since 1990. Twenty seven percent of pupils got five A-C GCSE, compared with almost 19 percent of English pupil.

The national average was 45 percent . meanwhile 58 percent of fluent English speaking Bangladeshi pupils got five higher grade GCSE's Bilingual pupils achieved more GCSE passes, with 83 percent gaining 5 or more A-G grades compared to 72 percent of monolingual pupils.

The struggle over religious and cultural needs of children in schools has largely been won, at least on paper. Most schools now will allow children to dress Islamicly, in accordance with parents' wishes. Often there has been a unifying feature in uniform, where colours are stipulated, no matter what cultural dress one may adopt. This means that clothing such as the *Hijāb* are often colour co-ordinated with the pullovers and ties of other children.

Muslims often talk about "Islamic Knowledge", without being able to give any comprehensible explanation to the uninitiated of what is meant. It is at this level that "Islamaphobia" enters in. There is a real fear within educational circles that permitting Muslim schools will

somehow open the gate to “fundamentalism” and that some strange esoteric educational system will prevail. It must be said that Muslim education lists have done nothing to dispel this misconception. So far. Supplementary schools, which remain wholly within Muslim control, provide some Islamic education separate from and in addition to day-schools. These continue to run, and their number increases. It is no longer so uncommon for them to be housed in specially equipped facilities, although the vast majority still take place on the floor of a mosque or a room in a house. They have not begun to address the issue of retaining children past the age of about thirteen, when most give up, nor have they undertaken to train their staff to be in educational harmony with day-schools. The most important element within this sector is the attempt which is being made in many places to run supplementary tutorial classes for children to assist them to make progress in subjects across the curriculum of their day-schools. There are informal weekend and evening sessions being run by Muslim teachers and educated members of the community to supplement the statutory provision in key subjects.

Farida Khanum, the young Muslim of Bangladeshi origin, who won her case for unfair dismissal and sex and race/discrimination against IBC,

Luton, has won in excess of £ 30,000 at Aremedy hearing organised by the Industrial Tribunal which heard her case. The Tribunal compensated her for unfair dismissal, loss of earning and the hurt of suffering sex and race discrimination, however, because she unrolled on university course in October 1997, and therefore was not deemed to have suffered unemployment and great loss of earning, her compensations a little less than she was expecting.

Muslim students are now significantly in advance of their demographic representation. There are signs that some discrimination is taking place in the “older” universities⁷, but generally a meritocracy rules. There have been schemes by various Muslim groups and individuals to provide grants for Muslim students to support them and keep them out of debt. This trend of seeking higher education will lead to a widening in the class split between the successful and the unemployed.

This division is already reflected in the working class but it is also likely to affect the managerial and professional classes; as such, it may lead to future racial tension, when a disproportionate number of Muslims are seen as qualified and successful.

⁷ Muslim News, Friday 28 march 1998, No. 107.

Community Development

In order to understand the development of the Muslim community, seven issues need to be addressed: *Ḥalāl* food, employment, housing, various aspects of health care, developments in the world of finance, the confusions regarding the Muslim calendar and problems surrounding burial.⁸

There is a substantial turnover in *Ḥalāl* meat. The scares provoked by the Muslim Parliament's *Ḥalāl* Food Authority, that 80% of all meat sold as *Ḥalāl* was *ḥarām* still go unsubstantiated. One important development is that trading standards and Environmental Health Officers are now co-operating more extensively with Muslim groups to ensure that meat really is *Ḥalāl*. The amount of money involved and the power which would be given to any group which controlled the food chain has made this an inviting area for those seeking to establish their authority. This was undoubtedly part of the Muslim Parliament's intention although one would not wish to be wholly cynical, as there was a degree of concern for the community involved as well. To date, the HFA has not proved to be effective. At most there are twenty

⁸ For more details see *Nielsen, J*, "Muslim in Western Europe", London 1992, p. 53, and see *Jamīlah, M.*, "Islam in Theory and Practices", Delhi 1983, p. 100.

butchers linked to the HFA, and these are only in London and Leicester. One may expect that this power struggle will continue.

Spurred on by the HFA, there have been several other bodies which have sought to oversee the supply of *Ḥalāl* meat locally. This is indicative of the lack of any kind of national structure. There are several smaller slaughterhouses starting up which may be a sign that customers are concerned and so seek tangible evidence that meat is *Ḥalāl*. The increase in provision of *Ḥalāl* food in institutions such as schools and hospitals is widespread and there has been a rise in the number of elderly dining clubs and meals-on-wheels services which serve *Ḥalāl* food.

Locally, Muslim unemployment rates can be as high as 50% of the adult males. Young people are increasingly finding it difficult to get work. This is in addition to long-term unemployment amongst the unskilled workers of the first generation. This has led to more jobs for women and a higher incidence of women working both in the home, as out-workers for factories, and in general employment. This has placed two strains on the community; first, in terms of the loss of face of a man who has to live from his wife's earnings, and second, because women are still

expected to run the home in the same way as if they were at home all day.

Mosques have become the centre of employment enterprises, particularly the Barelvy mosques which have the reputation of serving local needs more easily and have a strong sense of community solidarity. Examples of this are “sheltered” workshops for women, where they can be trained and later earn a living, basic language training for women, secretarial and computer literacy courses and organisations of home workers. Many of these schemes are run in partnership with local Training and Enterprise Councils and further education colleges. Similarly, there are job clubs and employment bureaux which are run from mosque bases.

The housing market amongst Muslims has slumped along with the general trend but it has been exacerbated by the unemployment rate. As the current housing stock occupied by Muslims deteriorates, and as the numbers living within each house increases, with children marrying and having families, several trends can be seen. The rise of Muslim housing associations is noteworthy, with Oldham and North London being the most prominent. They tend to enter the field as managing agents who specialise in providing housing for Muslim families, although they are

careful to maintain their “open” client lists by providing some housing for non-Muslims too. Often the housing thus supplied is specifically designed with Muslim families in mind. This may take the form of houses with several bedrooms, and at least two reception rooms, or houses which incorporate facilities on different floors, with a view to multi-generational occupation. Sometimes this means building houses to match the specifications but more often it means the conversion of larger old premises. Two main issues are becoming more apparent: First, the areas of cities in which Muslims traditionally live are becoming overcrowded, with few houses becoming available for young families to move into. This will inevitably lead to some families moving out of the traditional areas. It will be interesting to observe whether they will move to specific areas and form Muslim enclaves in the suburbs or spread themselves around suburbs according to socio-economic factors and then rely on being able to drive to visit families, friends, shops and mosques. Second, the majority of older people within the Muslim communities, are still looked after by their children but there are one or two housing schemes specifically designed for the elderly.

In the area of health care, one positive aspect has been the increased sensitivities of hospitals and health-care workers to the needs of Muslim

to pray in hospitals and for patients to be attended by doctors of the same sex. The increased number of women doctors in general assists this provision, and medicine remains one of the highly esteemed professions for young Muslims.

The most important issues which affect Muslims in terms of health are heart disease, general fitness and genetics. There is concern that the diet of subcontinental Muslims combined with smoking and the absence of exercise makes for a higher rate of heart disease than in the general population. Women in particular are susceptible to these factors, particularly as they traditionally do not avail themselves of any fitness programs. Possible remedies for this can be found in the increasing number of women-only swimming sessions and exercise classes which are proving popular. Research points to a higher incidence of birth defects and neo-natal mortality amongst children of first-cousin marriages, although this is often hotly contested by subcontinental leaders. This tends to increase the tensions surrounding the selection of potential marriage partners and can be a source of conflict with health providers. Finally, the moves towards the unlike normal methods of reproduction, genetic modification works in the laboratory by cutting, joining and transferring genes between totally unrelated things. As a

result, combination of genes are produced which would never occur naturally. Animals can also be engineered. A pig was modified with a human gene to make it grow faster and leaner.

What are the risks?

Many professional independent observers believe genetic engineering is unpredictable, unstable and dangerous. Mistakes have already been made in genetic engineering. Use of genetically modified bacteria in the food supplement Tryptophan may have caused 37 deaths in the USA since 1989 as well as permanently disabling thousands of people.

The genetic manipulation of foodstuffs has provoked concern for Muslims which comes on top of the concern for food additives which might have Harām antecedents.

The collapse of the BCCI and *al- Barakah* Bank was significant in terms of a token presence in the financial dealings of Muslims, but it did not affect very many people directly, although they specialised in minority community customers. This vacuum has not really been filled. Most Muslim are faced with dealing with interest-bearing institutions. Of particular note is the way in which commercial financial institutions are making services available for Muslim clients, such as the Islamically ethical unit trust scheme proposed by the stockbrokers, Multi-

Investment Company, which will cater for savings and pensions. This company sought out Muslim scholars to advise them on their products, but it was a commercial rather than a Muslim-inspired venture. In a similar way, *Robert Fleming Ltd*⁹ has organised an investment trust specialising in the Arab world, but this is confined to the larger investor, particularly Arab nationals and expatriates.

The inability of Muslim groups to agree on a common method for determining their calendar is a source of continued divisions within the community, with the major 'Īds being celebrated on several different days. Muslims living in Birmingham stand alone in being able to unite around a common formula, to ensure that everyone celebrates on the same day. This is highly desirable when it comes to seeking days off for festivals from employers and schools.

Burial is one of the most important needs of Muslims in the United Kingdom. There are still a number of people who are flown back to their country of origin for burial, notably so amongst the Bangladeshis who emigrated later, but all subcontinental Muslims are likely to have families and therefore family burial plots in their places of origin. The pressure for Muslim burial plots in the United Kingdom is rising, at a

⁹ Halāl investment company in Bahrain.

time when all burial space is under considerable pressure. This is exacerbated by the Islamic ruling of not re-using graves and of burying one body in each grave rather than the “multiple occupancy” which is common in the United Kingdom. Those who seek a particularly large plot so that relatives can actually stand in the grave to position the body are especially disadvantaged. This shortage of burial ground will increase considerably in the future.

There is a wider acceptance of Muslim traditional needs surrounding death and burial. Burial in a shroud but without a coffin is increasingly possible, given co-operation by local authorities, and arrangements are being made in several places for burials to take place at weekends and on summer evenings to expedite speedy burials. Some coroner’s courts are also co-operating in the speedy issuing of death certificates and arranging post-mortem examinations. Several mosques are now providing washing facilities for the dead, and at least two cemeteries have plans for shelters to protect mourners from the excesses of the weather in the United Kingdom. Recent trends towards “do-it-yourself” burial may well appeal to the Muslim communities, not only on the grounds of cost, but also as it allows the family to be more involved in the burial process, which is Islamically acceptable and customary.

**CHAPTER
SIX**

**PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE FUNCTION OF
THE DĀ'Ī
AND DA'WAH ORGANISATIONS**

The *dā'ī* must adopt the manners and general virtues which are mentioned in the *Qur'ān* and pure *Sunnah*. In addition, her needs;

- (a) To be a good example to those whom he calls by adhering to the principles that he preaches.
- (b) To ensure always that any action or statement which emanates from him does not contradict his message, thereby causing others to ignore his call.
- (c) intermittently to employ the methods of *Targhīb* and *Tarhīb*. Under no circumstances should he concentrate entirely on *Targhīb*, to the extent of giving the impression that there will be no accountability or punishments for men's transgressions. Similarly, he should not concentrate on *Tarhīb* so much so that people assume that there is nothing in Islam save punishment. Either of the two unbalanced approaches will naturally mislead Muslims as well as non-Muslims.
- (d) To address people according to their own levels of understanding and ability. A failure to do so may also have negative results.

- (e) Initially to concentrate on the fundamentals of faith and leave discussions of its details for later, more advanced stages.

The following are some specific proposals pertaining to the work of Islamic bodies, with particular reference to the customs, traditions and systems of Islam;

- (a) Islamic workers need at all times to display the noble qualities which Islam encourages, such as truthfulness, sincerity, trust and chastity.
- (b) They should always reflect the virtues of Islamic civilisation and morality, especially in their relationships with non-Muslims.
- (c) They should guarantee the social rights and high status with which Islam has endowed women.
- (d) They should respect elderly people and demonstrate concern for their welfare.
- (e) They should show compassion and kindness to the young and ensure their complete care children should be provided with the right family atmosphere to enable them to grow up righteously.

Proposals which relate specifically to the educational system and training.

It should be explained that:

- (a) Islam is a way of knowledge and enlightenment which should be pursued.
- (b) Islam has opened all the doors of scientific and literary knowledge, and it invites mankind to benefit from whatever is in the universe to increase their faith in *Allāh*.
- (c) Islam does not distinguish between knowledge and life or knowledge and morality. Each helps to complete the mission of the other. Hence any defect in one will be reflected in the other.
- (d) Islam has outlined the course it wishes the human intellect to adopt. It teaches him the boundaries and limits of this course. Thus whatever the level of knowledge acquired by the human mind, it will never be able to transcend the limits set by Islam. Any attempt to do so will be in effect imposing a burden upon the intellect greater than it can bear.
- (e) The mission of the school is the same as the mosque. They both work toward the formation of balanced and upright characters, particularly in terms of spiritual and bodily training.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND COMMENTS

VII.1- Conclusions

- The conditions of the Muslim community is steadily improving, despite the presence of certain mistaken ideas.
- The representation of Muslim opinion is to a certain extent very weak, their voice is not heard and there is a great need for them to express issues concerning them through the different forms of media.
- The Islamic economic situation in the United Kingdom. is not a very encouraging one, and as yet there does not seem to be any detailed study into how Islamic wealth can be invested in a manner according to the *Sharī'ah*.
- The woman and her role in Islam continues to be an unclear issue in the minds of many Muslims.

- The freedom afforded by British society is regarded as a positive factor; however many Muslims have used this freedom to break away from the teachings of Islam, whether in areas related to the manner of propagating Islam or of refuting and preaching against evil.
- The relationship between Islam and the United Kingdom. is an old one and it has witnessed many new developments. Equally, many attempts have been made to develop closer links between the two cultures. However that both of them still retain have their own distinct nature.
- The child in Islam remains an important focal point for studies, research and providing answers which will protect and preserve its affairs in the West.
- It is compulsory for Muslims to worship Allāh alone in all their acts of worship, *Allāh* says:

“That is because Allāh - He is the truth and what they invoke besides him, It is Bāṭil”

(22:62)

- It is important for Muslims to hold fast together, to give sincere advice to each other and to adhere to their religion.
- The law of Islam is the most perfect law and has been revealed primarily to establish monotheism belief in *Allāh*

Faith comprises speech and actions; the action of the heart and tongue. So actions derive from faith, and it is incumbent upon Muslims demonstrate this by performing the duties ordained for them and by avoiding where is prohibited.

They need to advise each other with patience and constancy, since a person is always tried and tested, whether in advocating good, forbidding evil or abiding by the commandments of *Allāh*.

Muslims need to adhere to their religion, so that they can be a living example of Islam for others in their characters, words and actions, this will enable others to see the greatness and virtue of Islam, and to recognise that it is the true religion: the religion of their natural disposition, of justice, equality, compassion, mercy and affection.

Muslims need to concentrate on belief, purifying it, sincerely worshipping *Allāh* alone in all their actions.

- They must teach the ignorant, guide the lost and give testimony in the best of ways *Allāh* says:

“Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair preaching, and argue with them in a way that is best”

(16:125)

VII.2- Comment

The study of the Muslim community in the United Kingdom. remains one of the most important and high-profile areas of discussion and concern. The increase of the number of Muslims residing in the United Kingdom, whether by immigration or by birth, has been clearly shown, likewise, the increase in the erection of Mosques and Islamic Centres, owing to the freedom afforded by the British law which to a certain degree is distinguished by its resolve to protect and allow minorities to preserve their culture and heritage.

In light of the study undertaken in this research, I believe that the condition of the Muslims in the United Kingdom will improve even more in the future, especially in the areas of the spread of correct knowledge and the attendance of youth at the mosques and Islamic

centres, with the increase of the role of the mosque as an educational, social, and leisure centre as well as one for worship.

The presence of the many deviant and destructive ideologies emanating from intellectual establishments has produced opportunities for meetings and debates and in turn caused a reaction in the realm of Islamic propagation in the United Kingdom.. I would not be far from the truth if I were to state that this Intellectual battle has given the Muslims a negative reputation and has further encouraged the common idea that Muslims are dictatorial and do not listen to other views.

Certainly the subject area of this thesis is still in need of more research in order to arrive at even better theoretical and practical conclusions which may further enhance the condition of Muslims in the United Kingdom. I hope, however, that I have shed some light on different aspects of the life of the Muslims resident in the United Kingdom.

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