

Sunni Muslim Religiosity in the UK Muslim

Diaspora: Mosques in Leeds compared

Aydın Bayram

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Leeds

The School of Philosophy, Religion and the History of Science

January 2013

The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his/her own, except where work which has formed part of jointly-authored publications has been included. The contribution of the candidate and the other authors to this work has been explicitly indicated below. The candidate confirms that appropriate credit has been given within the thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

This copy has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

The right of Aydın Bayram to be identified as Author of this work has been asserted by him in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

© 2013 The University of Leeds and Aydın Bayram

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank the Ministry of Education in Turkey for providing me with this opportunity to do postgraduate research abroad and for funding both tuition fees and life expenses during my stay in Britain.

For reasons of anonymity, I refrain from mentioning the names of my informants. However, the friendly response of all the imams and fellow Muslims who hosted me in the selected mosques (Leeds Islamic Centre, Leeds Grand Mosque, Leeds Iqra Centre, and Leeds Makkah Masjid) needs to be acknowledged with thanks here. I am very grateful to all those who voluntarily participated in this research project and gave of their time to help me.

I would like to thank Dr. Sean McLoughlin for his excellent supervision and direction from the beginning of my PhD to the end. I owe to him a lot in guiding my research on Sunni Muslim communities in Britain during my first year; his availability whenever I needed to consult him and his empathy understanding my circumstances; and also teaching me the subtleties of ethnographic research.

I thank my wife, Derya, for her endless support and motivation, and my son, Furkan Efe, for his patience when I could spend only limited time with him. Finally, I would like to thank my father and mother-in-law, Necmettin and Fatma Akdag, for their efforts in helping me and my wife all the time we were in Britain, and especially my mother, Fatma, for her help before and after the birth of my daughter, Zeynep Bilge, during the final stages of writing-up my thesis.

Abstract

In modernity traditional Islam has been challenged by a separation from various spheres of life, first under colonial powers and then independent nation-states. Traditional patterns of religious authority have further been undermined by individualism and the pluralisation of sources of knowledge in an age of new media. In the context of migration to the West, some scholars have argued that modern Muslim identities are becoming more secularised and individualised. However, in a local case study of Sunni religiosity in the UK, I show that, overall, this is not the case in the city of Leeds. In Chapter 1 I examine a three-part typology of Muslim responses to modernity dwelling on the orientations of reformists and (neo)traditionalists. In Chapter 2 I outline the migrations which have seen South Asian and Middle Eastern Muslims and their associated (neo)traditional and reformist movements established in the UK. Chapter 3 offers an account of the qualitative methodology I used in researching the views of around 40 imams, scholars and members of the congregation across four different Sunni mosques in Leeds. In Chapter 4 I locate these mosques and their history, unpacking key ethnic and religious differences. Chapter 5 underlines the difficulty of establishing Muslim unity through case studies of the celebration of *'Eid al-Adha* and the work of Leeds Muslim Forum. Chapter 6 argues that although not always the most expert in terms of authority, mosque imams are the key providers of religious advice to their congregations. Chapter 7 suggests that while most Sunni Muslims and religious experts in Leeds assert the importance of following a school of law (*taqlid*), they also affirm the desirability of use of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) by a *mujtahid* (one

qualified to exercise *ijtihad*) in the specific contexts of the UK. Overall, Sunni Muslim religiosity in Leeds remains deeply influenced by tradition, something reinforced by ethnicity and sect.

List of figures and tables

Figure 1: A map of Mosque Distribution in Leeds (mosques signalled here by letters are identified in Table 1)	91
Figure 2: A Picture of Leeds Islamic Centre	102
Figure 3: A picture of Leeds Grand Mosque.....	105
Figure 4: A picture of Leeds Iqra Centre	108
Figure 5: A picture of Leeds Makkah Masjid	111
Table 1: Mosque list in Leeds	92
Table 2: Sources of religious authority for Sunni Muslims in Leeds as a response to an interview question: Who/what do you consult when you come across any problem regarding faith and practice?	169
Table 3: A comparison of attitudes towards taqlid and ijti had.....	209

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	2
Abstract	3
List of figures and tables	5
Introduction	11
Chapter 1	23
Islam and Modernity: Mapping Modernist, Reformist and Traditionalist Responses	23
1.1. Modernity and the transformation of the Muslim world:	25
1.2. Muslim responses to modernity:	29
1.2.1. Modernist discourse (Islamic modernists and secularists):	30
1.2.2. Islamist discourse (revivalist or fundamentalist):	35
1.2.3. Traditionalist discourse:.....	41
1.4. Conclusion:	47
Chapter 2	48
The Muslim Diaspora in Britain.....	48
2.1. Muslim migration to Britain and the process of settlement:.....	49
2.2. The Institutionalisation of Islam in Britain:.....	53

2.3. The Construction of religious identity: Sunni Muslim religious movements in Britain.....	56
2.4. National-level representation and intra-Muslim interactions: who speaks for British Muslims?.....	66
2.5. Conclusion:	70
Chapter 3	72
Methodological reflections on studying Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds	72
3.1. Research Locations and Methods, Reflexivity and Challenges:.....	73
3.1.1. Participant observation:	75
3.1.2. Qualitative interviewing:	81
3.1.3. Collection of ephemeral material:	83
3.2. The process of data analysis and reflexivity of the fieldwork research:	84
3.3. Conclusion:	86
Chapter 4	88
Religious diversity and difference among Sunni Muslims in Leeds	88
4.1. Muslims on a local scale: Muslim diversity in Leeds	89
4.2. The history of the Muslim presence in Leeds:.....	94
4.3. Mosques in Leeds:.....	98

4.3.1. Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC):	100
4.3.2. Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM):.....	104
4.3.3. Leeds Iqra Centre (IC):.....	107
4.3.4. Leeds Makkah Masjid (LMM):.....	110
4.4. Discourses on religious diversity among Sunni Muslims in Leeds:	114
4.4.1. Different implementations of agreed religious practices:.....	117
4.4.2. Differences in belief matters:.....	119
4.5. Conclusion:	123
Chapter 5	125
Muslim relations with other Muslims and the wider society	125
5.1. Intra-Muslim interactions in Britain:.....	127
5.2. Local-level presentation of Muslims' intra-faith relations and interactions with the wider society:	134
5.2.1. A dilemma for the Muslim community in Leeds: When shall we celebrate <i>'eid al-adha</i> this year?.....	136
5.2.2. The views of ordinary Muslims and religious experts on celebrating <i>'eid al-adha</i> on different days:	141

5.2.3. Leeds Muslim Forum: an umbrella body for interactions with the wider society at the local level	151
5.3. Conclusion	156
Chapter 6	158
Religious authority among Sunni Muslims in Leeds	158
6.1. Religious authority in Islam:	160
6.2. The patterns of religious authority in Leeds:	168
6.2.1 Mosque imams:	170
6.2.2. Religious experts:	182
6.2.3. The internet:	193
6.3. Conclusion:	195
Chapter 7	197
The meanings and functions of <i>ijtihad</i> , <i>taqlid</i> , and <i>fatwa</i> for Sunni Muslims in Leeds	197
7.1. <i>Ijtihad</i> , <i>taqlid</i> , and <i>fatwa</i> in Islam:	198
7.2. <i>Ijtihad</i> , <i>taqlid</i> , and <i>fatawa</i> among Sunni Muslims in Leeds:	208
7.2.1. Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC):	212
7.2.2. Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM):	213

7.2.3. Leeds Iqra Centre (IC):.....	216
7.2.4. Leeds Makkah Masjid (LMM):.....	219
7.2.5. Mosque imams and religious experts:	221
7.3. Towards a contemporary <i>mujtahid</i> in the British context:	226
7.4. Conclusion:	236
Conclusion.....	239
Bibliography	244
List of abbreviations	266
A note on transliteration.....	268
Glossary.....	269
Appendix A: Sample Interview Schedule for Masjid Attendees.....	279
Appendix B: Sample Interview Schedule for Mosque Imams and Religious Experts	286
Appendix C: Participant Consent Form.....	294
Appendix D: Information Sheet	296
Appendix E: Permission Letter to the Mosque Committees	300

Introduction

The impact of global modernity has created fundamental transformations in the social, economic, cultural, and intellectual life of human beings, which are all configured slightly differently in various societies. In Renaissance and Reformation Europe, the “principle of religious freedom developed, through blood and tears, and this led to that gradual separation of the political and religious spheres” (Cesari, 2004: 43). With the rise of science and the Enlightenment, belief was gradually undermined in intellectual terms, while through the secularisation of society, public functions of religion were increasingly assumed by the nation-state. In this context, traditional sources of religious authority were undermined and religiosity gradually became more privatised and individualised.

The imperial and colonial expansion of Europe disseminated such ideas to the rest of the world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Rippin, 2003). Muslim progressives imported socio-economic institutions of the West (Rahman, 1969: 249) and eventually there was a questioning too of religious education, the place of Shari’a law, and the functions of religious authority and its institutions, such as *fatwa* and *ijtihad* (Salvatore, 2009: 193-5; Rippin, 2003: 187). Muslim intellectuals and Islamic scholars produced very different responses towards modernity, which can be categorised variously as ‘modernist’, ‘secularist’, ‘traditionalist’, ‘reformist’ or ‘fundamentalist’. However, despite the role of many populist traditionalist and reformist/fundamentalist movements in the fight for independence, postcolonial Muslim states typically adapted secular-nationalist policies, implementing mass modern education systems, and confining religious law to personal law. The tone

was set by Turkey which abolished the Caliphate, giving up the symbolic leadership of the whole Muslim community, in 1924. Since then, most Muslim nation-states have had directorates for religious affairs or relevant institutions under the ministry of *awqaf* (pious endowments). Some positions, such as those of legal jurists, *qadis* or juristconsults, and *muftis* (one who issues legal opinions), either disappeared or were replaced with secular nation-states' officials.

From the 1970s, a widespread Islamic political revival saw the legitimacy of these failing regimes challenged. In late modernity, communication technologies and new media have further enlarged human freedoms and enhanced choice not least in terms of sources of religious knowledge (Eickelman, 1992; 2000). Against such a context it has been argued that religious authority has been challenged and reshaped (Rahman, 1979; Kurzman, 2002; Rippin, 2003) giving rise to an individualistic approach to interpreting the sources of Islam (the Qur'an and *Sunnah*) among many ordinary Muslims or 'lay interpreters' (Robinson, 2009: 349). Late modernity has also witnessed new levels of global mobility amongst migrant workers, with 15 million Muslims now forming the largest religious group in Western Europe. Cesari (2004) sees migration to the West as liberation for Muslims: "increasing secularization of individual Islamic practice. More and more, religious practice tends to become a private matter, freed from the social conventions and standards of Islam as practiced in officially Muslim countries" (Cesari, 2004: 45).

My research, then, aims to explore Sunni Islam in a non-Muslim country, Britain, with particular reference to religious belief and practice, relations between Muslims and with non-Muslims, as well as continuity and change in religious authority and its associated institutions, such as *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning) and *fatawa*

(religio-legal opinions). In particular, contrary to Cesari's claim (2004) I argue that in Britain at least it is not the case that as a Muslim one will most likely "lose one's relationship to Islam as a cultural and social *fait accompli*" (Cesari, 2004: 45). In this regard I maintain that the persistence of traditional forms of the Islamic religious system (education, rituals, and authority) in Britain, not least in the context of a society which has enabled the reinforcing of faith, community and ethnicity, underlines that global modern trends are always 'locally' negotiated (Robertson, 1995; Beyer, 2003, 2009).

In emphasising the continuing significance of tradition in modernity, my work builds on that of others in the UK who have studied neo-traditionalist and reformist movements especially in South Asian Muslim traditions (see Geaves, 1996, 2000, 2009; Lewis, 1994, 2007; Gilliat-Ray, 1994, 2010). For example, Geaves (2005) explores that not only religious belief and practices but also religious authority for ordinary Muslims has been shaped according to the method and teachings of a certain movement, or a *tariqah*.¹

The tariqas have capitalized on the strong empathy with the teachings of traditional Islam as embodied within Sufism and in recent years have been able to provide a unifying Islamic discourse based on practice and belief and drawing upon the traditional loyalty of the above populations to the leadership of pirs [sufi teachers] and shaykhs [saints] rather than the ulama (Geaves, 2005: 4).

¹ *Tariqah* (plural form *turuq*) literally means way or path, the technical counterpart in English is Sufi order.

The Muslim Diaspora in the UK contains various people who express a diversity of complex forms of Islam, each constituting a small part of the global Muslim community (*ummah*). In that regard, it has two fundamental characteristic divergences: one is ethnic diversity, comprising Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, Arabs, Iranians, Turks, Africans, and so on (Ansari, 2004; Gilliat-Ray, 2010). The second is religious that traditionalist and reformist groups/movements originating in the Indian subcontinent, namely the Deobandis and Tablighi Jama'at, the Barelwis, Jama'at-i Islami and Ahl-e Hadis (Lewis, 1993; Geaves, 1994), predominate over the ones from the Middle East (Salafi, Wahhabi) or elsewhere.

Barton (1986) and Lewis (1993, 2007) provide important information about the role of *'ulama* amongst the Sunni Muslim communities originating from the Indian subcontinent until the 1990s. Jonathan Birt (2005) studies the contestation of religious authority by dealing with the Deobandi *ulama*. Birt and Lewis (2010) examine the patterns of Muslim religious seminaries throughout Britain and delve into the details in curriculum. Geaves (2005, 2008, and 2012) also sheds light on the training and education facilities of imams in Britain. To sum up, not only do the Barelwis maintain the traditional religious system, but also the Deobandis preserve this system albeit their critical stance towards custom-laden practices of Sufi-Barelwis.

If we describe Sunni Muslim groups in Britain as 'reformist' and 'traditionalist', the former includes movements from the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent (Salafi, Wahhabi, Muslim Brotherhood and Jama'ati Islami, respectively); whereas the latter could be Deobandis and Barelwis from the subcontinent. This category is in terms of maintaining traditional forms of religious system including education,

authority, *ijtihad* and *taqlid*. Thereby, the nineteenth century reform-movement Deobandis fits best to a traditional category with its institutions and patterns of religious education throughout Britain as reflected in the above literature. In addition, based on ethnographic research this thesis (see Chapters 4-7) suggests the same.

Both traditional and reformist movements claim legitimacy by contesting the right to present true Islam and transmit their methods and teachings to indigenous-born young Muslims (see Geaves, 2009: 102). Traditionalists basically advocate the virtue of the past with strong adherence to four Sunni schools of law, whereas the reformists always claim to purify religious belief and practices influenced by customs and mystics in order to return to pure Islam practiced by the first three generations. The intra-Muslim relations amongst these Sunni movements sometimes become more complex that such sub-groups of Sunni Islam radically fight each other in terms of excluding one another from the main branch of Islam, even accusing one another for being infidel (*kafir*). For instance, Salafi thought in Britain is well-known with its enmity towards Sufi practices, and thereby the Barelwis are found in the centre against not only reformist rhetoric from the Arabs but also from their own ethnic Muslim fellows from the Indian Subcontinent, i.e the Deobandis and Jama'ati Islami, (see Geaves, 2000: 53-4; 2005: 5). All these groups exist within Sunni Islam, and either conflicts or dichotomies all revolve around issues, which emerged with modernity.

In the context of Britain, according to Geaves (2009: 102), traditional Islam is under threat from better organised reformist movements that differ from each other in their agenda and, hence, cannot form any unity. Pre-modern reform movement Wahhabiyya (Birt, 2005), twentieth century reformists including Salafiyya (Meijer,

2009) and the Muslim Brotherhood, as well as more radical groups, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir and al-Muhajirun (Taji-Farouki, 1996; Wicktorowicz, 2005; Gilliat-Ray, 2010) become a significant and increasingly important phenomenon in that context, with interesting crossovers as well as conflicts between them.

These latter two marginal groups, as the main instruments of “global Islam” (Roy 2004: 177), target the second or third generation, indigenous-born, native-language speaking Muslim youth motivating into ‘neo-Wahhabi’ tendencies (Geaves, 2009: 102). Thus, they criticise Sufi-laden traditional Islam or dominant religious identity of the first and second generation Muslims in the West. According to Oliver Roy’s analysis, in the aftermath of political Islam’s failure (Roy, 1994), ‘neofundamentalism’ has taken on an active role, its ideologues specifically seeing this failure as “an opportunity, not a loss”, targeting the Muslim youth in the West to create a “universal religious identity” disconnected from any specific culture or far from any traditionalist tendency of religious identity. In summary, the reproduction of ethnic and sectarian rivalry between the reformist and traditionalist movements prevents any contribution to potential development of a uniquely British or even Western form of Islam (Geaves, 2009: 105).

Considering Muslim Diaspora in Britain, ethnographic investigation should be made to see how global processes get configured in specific ways in localities in order to avoid essentialist and generic claims about Muslim communities. Thus, a key concern of mine in this thesis is the study of how Islam is interpreted and performed in the new settings of the Muslim Diaspora, which is characterised by its ‘ethnic’ and ‘sectarian’ diversity (Lewis, 1994: 56; Geaves, 1996: 160).

Indeed, in a recent article Marranci (2010: 372) proposes that “social scientists should start from Muslims rather than Islam” because the latter term differs from one community to another, even from one person to another when we consider the socio-cultural conditions of a particular geographic location, since “there are as many Islams as there are situations that sustain them” (Manger, 1999: 17). Contextual factors therefore play an important role in shaping religious identity and such diversity can be seen throughout the Muslim world as contesting “any simple Orientalist notion of an unchanging world of Islam” (Manger, 1999: 3).

All above ethnic and religious diversity of the Muslim community in Britain drew my attention when I was doing my Master’s degree in Religion and Public Life (2008) at the University of Leeds. My journey into studying Muslims in Britain began in the second term of that degree course when I took a module called ‘Muslims, Multiculturalism, and State’ given by my supervisor, Dr. Sean McLoughlin. Before coming to Leeds, I graduated from one of the most prestigious divinity schools in Turkey, Ataturk University, where I first developed my interest in Islamic ‘sects’. Furthermore, I worked as an official *imam-hatib* of the Directorate for Religious Affairs (Diyamet Isleri Baskanligi) for about 15 months while studying *tasawwuf* (Sufism) at the same university. Being here, in Britain, made it possible for me to see the diversity of Sunni Muslim religious beliefs and practices at first hand, especially when I visited the main mosques of Leeds, alongside reading the literature on Muslims in Britain.

Concerning the literature above, there is a gap in such studies in terms of examining Sunni Muslims’ daily life in practice with its certain dimensions, namely religious rituals, intra-faith relations, religious authority, and the efficacy of traditional tools of

religious authority. To detail these dimensions further: firstly, the differences between movements from the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East in terms of religious belief and practice. Secondly, intra-Sunni Muslim interactions on both religious and social issues, for instance, how Sunni Muslims interact with others in making unity, e.g. allocating the time for the beginning/end of Ramadan (holy month for fasting) or two *eid* (festivals). Thirdly, the way of ordinary Muslims seeking religious advice and their conception of religious authority in the absence of a single religious authority for all and the proliferation of non-*ulama* or lay interpreters. Finally, the continuity and change in concepts like *ijtihad* (individual effort in deriving interpretations in Islamic law), *taqlid* (imitation), and *fatawa* (religio-legal rulings) in contemporary life. My concern focuses on such topics in order to investigate some of the ways Sunni Muslims cope with life in a secular, multi-faith, non-Muslim society but in accordance with Islamic law. As a result, this encouraged me to develop the following research questions:

- What has happened to Sunni Islam and traditional religious authority in modernity?
- What are the main dimensions and impact of religious diversity among Sunni Muslims in Britain, and what are the theological/other discourses behind this diversity?
- What is the attitude of Sunni Muslims towards intra-Muslim unity in religious as well as social matters?
- Who are the sources of religious authority for Sunni Muslims in the UK?

- What is the attitude of Sunni Muslims towards *taqlid* (following a law school), the need for *ijtihad*, and *fatawa* (the issuing of religio-legal opinions) among mosque congregations and religious experts?

In seeking to explore these questions based on ethnographic research in four mosques associated with different Islamic movements in Leeds, I hope to make a contribution to the documentation of Sunni religious life in the UK, its diversity, efforts for intra-Muslim dialogue for social and religious unity, and the function-influence of traditional religious authority with its instruments (*ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *fatawa*) in the life of Muslims. In doing so, I benefit not only from religious experts (imams and *ulama*) but also ordinary Muslims. In what follows I briefly introduce the content of this thesis chapter by chapter.

Chapter 1 introduces the encounter of Muslims with modernity in terms of various economic, political, social and cultural transformations. A three-part typology of Muslim responses towards modernity is explored, namely modernism (including secularism), Islamism (fundamentalism and reformism) and (neo-) traditionalism, with special reference to traditionalist and reformist movements in the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East. In particular, I give accounts of the Islamist (fundamentalist and reformist) Jama'at-i Islami and Salafi movements (including the Wahhabiyya and Muslim Brotherhood), as well as the (neo-) traditionalist Deobandi (including Tablighi Jama'at) and Barelwi movements, as all have been active in shaping contemporary Muslim identity in Britain.

Chapter 2 contextualises the Muslim presence in the UK, beginning with examining the significance of the concepts of migration, diaspora and transnationalism. I then

consider how Islam has been institutionalised in Britain as part of the different stages of the migration process, dwelling in particular upon ethnicity and the influence of the above-mentioned movements transplanted to the UK, both in terms of the construction of religious beliefs, practices and identities amongst Muslims, and the representation of Islam to non-Muslims in national-level umbrella organisations, which have been unable to entirely transcend intra-faith and intra-ethnic polemics.

In Chapter 3, I reflect upon my methodology and the rationale for the research strategies used during fieldwork in four Sunni mosques in Leeds. I discuss the practicalities of gaining access to the mosques, the ethical issues that arose in this regard and draw attention reflexively to my ‘insider’ researcher status as a young Turkish Muslim male, evaluating how this impacted on my observation and participation in religious rituals and practices, as well as the respondents I was able to build the best research relationships with. For instance, gender was a significant issue in this regard, as was language to a lesser extent. I also reflect on processes of data analysis. This chapter thus functions as a bridge to the subsequent ‘fieldwork’ chapters.

Chapter 4 introduces the Muslim community in Leeds in terms of demography and early migration trends from the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East. I map out the ethnic and religious diversity of Muslims in the city by profiling all of its mosques in terms of location, size, ethnic background and religious tendency. Having chosen to dwell upon four mosques representing the aforementioned movements, I locate each in turn in more detail in terms of religious differences and conflicts in beliefs and practices among Sunni Muslim communities in the city. I

argue that, as the centre of socio-religious activities, mosques in Leeds play an influential role in shaping an ordinary Muslim's religious identity.

In Chapter 5 I deal with intra-Muslim interactions not only in religious matters but also in terms of representing Muslims to the wider society. I examine a local case study of intra-Muslim attitudes to, and efforts towards, unity as far as '*Eid al-Adha* (the Festival of the Sacrifice) is concerned. My investigations show that in 2010 Muslims in Leeds performed the associated rituals on two different days, and based on my fieldwork I reflect the opinions and experiences of both ordinary Muslims and religious experts regarding this issue. I demonstrate the difficulties faced in pursuit of a solution to resolve disagreements among Sunni Muslims in the city on the timing of the celebrations, linking their arguments to different Islamic movements' orientations. The chapter concludes with some reflections on Leeds Muslim Forum, which was established in 2001 as a vehicle for Muslim communities in Leeds to co-operate in communicating with the wider society following the '9/11' and '7/7' bombing events.

Chapter 6 begins by sketching the issue of religious authority in Islam in an historical context, dwelling on the challenges to traditional structures in modernity. It then seeks to offer a living example of ordinary Muslims' attitudes to such religious authority in the context of a non-Muslim country. The functions of mosque imams and their role as everyday religious authorities are discovered by reflecting on the perspectives of ordinary Muslims in the selected mosques. Therefore, I consider the content of selected religious advice given by the imams. I also consider examples of *fatawa* given by religious scholars, for example on combining two prayers in the context of Britain and following a particular school of law.

In Chapter 7, I first deal with the interrelated notions of *ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *fatawa* by giving a brief account of relevant theoretical and historical usage. Then I investigate the place of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* in the religious life of both ordinary Muslims and religious experts. In the British context, both ordinary Muslims and scholars are discussing whether it is necessary to follow one of the four Islamic schools of law (*taqlid*) or not. I show that the *Salafi* rejectionist approach towards *taqlid* (Hamid, 2009: 356) is met with strong opposition from traditionalist South Asian religious groups such as the Deobandis (Metcalf, 1982: 141; Usmani, 2006: 66) and Barelwis (Ammar, 2001: 74). I also give an account of the prerequisites for being considered a contemporary *mujtahid* (one who exercises *ijtihad*) in the British context, illustrating the views of mosque imams.

In conclusion, this thesis suggests that Sunni Muslim religious identity is configured in relation to the mosque and mosque authority, and this plays a crucial role in the maintenance of ethnic and sectarian discourse, which prevents Sunni Muslims in the city from forming any unity in religious practices and social matters. Contrary to the assumption that religion has become a private matter, with modernity and religious authority fragmented further in the context of migration to Europe, this local ethnographic research claims that a traditional religious system in terms of religious authority and its institutions (*ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *fatawa*) has been maintained. For ordinary Muslims, mosque and mosque imams play a significant role in preserving that religious system.

Chapter 1

Islam and Modernity: Mapping Modernist, Reformist and Traditionalist Responses

For the last three centuries, Muslims from different parts of the Islamic world have interpreted modernity in quite different ways in societies shaped in large part by a religious civilisation. As we will see, Muslims initially experienced modernity as the realisation of their own backwardness in particular spheres when compared to the rapid advances in Europe. However, modernity soon came to encompass all areas of economic, political, social and cultural life and it can be considered a key turning point in the history of the Muslim world, witnessing wide-ranging transformations in religious thought and the organisation of religious life.

While scholars now speak of multiple modernities or late modernities, including Islamic modernity, Muslims and many others tend to associate modernity with Westernisation. Nevertheless, their views on its compatibility with Islam have varied quite considerably. In terms of mapping this variety, various scholars have identified three basic orientations: modernism, ‘fundamentalism’ / Islamism and traditionalism. I will define these here briefly by way of introduction before examining each in more detail in the rest of this chapter.

Firstly, ‘modernism’ may be seen as encompassing both Islamic modernists and secularists. The former argue that modernity is compatible with Islam, and call for a new Islamic theology in order to justify this compatibility. In the past, Islamic

theology was a methodological framework to deal with intellectual challenges. However, according to Islamic modernists, this old theology was unable to respond to the many challenges which modernity posed and so it should therefore be replaced by a new theology that could answer the needs of modern times. As for the secularists, they have argued that one of the main causes for the backwardness of Muslims was its adherence to tradition and religion per se, something that in modernity should be confined to the private sphere.

Secondly, 'fundamentalism' or 'Islamism' refers to revivalist thinking that calls for a return to the practices of the ancestors (*salaf u salihin*), meaning the first three generations of Muslims, and for reform (*islah*) of religious practices influenced by customary practices and mystical interpretations. It also opposes adherence (*taqlid*) to schools of law, and sees a strong necessity for *ijtihad* (individual 'effort' in deriving interpretations in Islamic law).

Finally, 'traditionalism' refers to those whose response to modernity has been to carry on much as before, maintaining a strong loyalty to the religious faith and practices inherited from the past and bound up with religious experts such as '*ulama* and Sufi *shaykhs*. For traditionalists, there is limited need for change in social institutions and the existing methodology of jurisprudence. The gates of *ijtihad* are closed as Islamic law is viewed as having reached its peak with the four originators of the Sunni schools of law (Hanafi, Shafi'i, Hanbali, and Maliki).

In the rest of this chapter, I begin by introducing modernity in terms of various transformations in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres of the Muslim world. I then unpack the three-part typology of Muslim responses towards modernity

mentioned above with special reference to traditionalist and reformist movements in the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East, as they have been most active in shaping contemporary Muslim identity in Britain. In the final section, I explore how changes in Islamic theology (*kalam*) and jurisprudence (*fiqh*) have impacted Sunni Muslim religiosity including religious beliefs, practices and structures of authority.

1.1. Modernity and the transformation of the Muslim world:

“Modernity is that which has created fundamental changes in behaviour and belief about economics, politics, social organization, and intellectual discourse” (Rippin, 2003: 178). Apart from the introduction of Greek Philosophy to Islamic theology (*kalam*), Muslims have never experienced such significant challenges. When Islam’s European expansion ended at the gates of Vienna in 1648, and then Napoleon landed in Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century, it seemed that there was proof of the Islamic world’s impotence in international politics and military matters. Some attempts were made in the military and educational domains by Muslim rulers and intellectuals to reclaim the past and close the gap with the West. For example, Selim III (1789-1807), the Ottoman Sultan, introduced his ‘*Nizam-ı Jedid*’ (The New Organization) in the military and administrative fields; this was followed by the ‘*Tanzimat*’ (Re-organization) of 1839-1876 which encompassed economic, social and religious affairs (Lapidus, 2002: 599). However, these efforts were superficial; students were sent to the West and Western teachers travelled East but the classical curriculum in education was not fundamentally reformed.

With its industrial revolution, Europeans had already begun to seek out materials as well as markets for their industries overseas, and this situation eventually led to

Western colonialism around the world. As the leading Muslim power of the early modern period, the Ottoman Empire, had been experiencing splits and divisions in its military and social institutions and before long the majority of Muslim states came under the direct influence of the West: the Dutch invaded Indonesia; the British established their rule in India and took control of some parts of the Middle East and Africa; the French seized North Africa and the western part of the Middle East; while the Russians and Chinese absorbed inner Asia. Of course, the stagnation of Islamic civilisation in the medieval period may be accepted as having played a vital role in causing Muslims to miss the modernisation train. The stagnation of Islamic thought and art, the weakness of the religious intelligentsia and its institutions, and the recession of scientific studies are all crucial internal factors. Nevertheless, European colonisation did negatively impact Muslims both in terms of geographical imperialism and ongoing “cultural imperialism” (Shepard, 2004: 61). As Fazlur Rahman has argued, the second of these, which became more important when the former receded in the twentieth century, entered the Muslim world via Christian missionaries who were a carrier for modern thought of Europe and academic critique (1979: 212).

In the past, Muslim civilisation met ‘Hellenistic’ thought successfully at a time when the Islamic world was confident and powerful. In modernity, however, the relative powerlessness of the Muslim powers meant that Islam experienced the transformations associated with modernity largely in terms of domination. As Zubaida argues:

The transformations resulted mainly from the incorporation of the region into the expanding capitalist markets dominated by the European powers.

This was not merely European domination, but transformations of economy and society, creating new spheres of activity, classes of the population and relations to power. Political, military, and administrative reforms were responses of ruling groups to new situations (2009: 65).

New classes developed in service and industrial fields as well as government bureaucracy and education. Religious classes began to disappear and their main functions in law and education were being bureaucratised (and secularised) at the hands of state personnel who gained modern education in new state schools. Having direct contact with the European nations, Western orientated intellectuals, poets, journalists, writers, and so on, read European literature widely and translated many works of the Western world into their mother tongues.

Borrowing or adopting Western social institutions began gradually in the nineteenth century: “commercial and civil codes in Egypt in the 1870s, some fully fledged and intentional secularism, however comes with the Turkish reforms of the 1920s and 1930s” (Shepard, 2004: 64). In Turkey, many secular changes were brought into the social and economic spheres but not often in politics, and a single-party policy continued until the middle of the century. In 1916, the constitutional government, the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, *Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), reduced the powers of the religious authority or *Sheikh al-Islam*, transferring jurisdiction from *Shari'a* courts to the Ministry of Justice, and control of Muslim colleges to the Ministry of Education. In 1917, a new family code based on European principles was promulgated (Lapidus, 2002: 602). In the 1920s, the *Shari'a* law was replaced with a civil code adopted from the Swiss code; it was subsequently followed by the adaptation of the Western calendar, and also by length-weight measurements and

western style clothing for men and women. Education was taken from the hands of the *'ulama* with “the unity of education law” (*tevhid-i tedrisat kanunu*). Briefly, it can be said that after the War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk brought into practical effect the principles of the CUP. In Iran, meanwhile, Reza Shah Pahlavi was no less ambitious than Atatürk to make the country secular. To that end, he introduced secular law and education, and pushed nationalism and Persian identity. However, the *'ulama* were not brought under the full control of the state as in Turkey. Egypt, after gaining independence in 1922, adopted a constitution giving all authority to the nation, but made Islam the religion of the state.

The abolition of the Caliphate in 1924 had an important symbolic impact on the Muslim community. In Egypt, Rashid Rida (d.1935) supported the preservation of the caliphate as did Abu-l-Kalam Azad (d.1958) in India (Masud, 2009: 247). However, as independence movements appropriated Western notions of self-determination, the mid-twentieth century eventually saw the establishment of nation-states throughout Muslim lands. The dominant political ideology of secular nationalism had been very much evident in the project of M. K. Atatürk (d.1938), founder of the Republic of Turkey (Sayyid, 1997), as it was in the Shah's Iran, and it persisted in late decades in the ‘Secular Arab nationalism’ of *Ba'thist* ideology in Syria and Iraq, Nasserism in Egypt and the thoughts of Colonel Qadhafi in Libya (Shepard, 2004: 69; Halliday, 2003: 28). However, despite a new confidence as the postcolonial world began to take shape, the failure of such regimes to deliver development to match the West eventually saw a so-called Islamic resurgence in the 1970s and 1980s, symbolised by the Islamic revolution in Iran during 1979.

1.2. Muslim responses to modernity:

An important diagnosis of Muslim stagnation in modernity comes from Pakistani modernist, Fazlur Rahman, who suggests that new methodologies in Islamic thinking are necessary in modernity:

Muslims have to face a situation of fundamental rethinking and reconstruction, their acute problem is precisely to determine how far to render the slate again and on what principles and by what methods, in order to create a new set of institutions (1979: 214).

In the past, a number of Islamic revivalists and reformists attempted to update social and religious institutions in the Muslim world. Such attempts can be traced back to the post-Hellenistic age. For instance, Imam Ghazali (d.1111) tried to systematize the religious sciences with his well-known book *Ihya u Ulum ad-Din*, while Ibn Taymiyya (d.1328) interpreted the sources more rigidly in a way that influenced pre-modern reform movements, such as Wahhabism.² However, such previous attempts

² This emerged in the province of Najd, located in the central Arabian Peninsula, in the eighteenth century. Its founder was the pre-modern reformist Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d.1792), and like reformists in the Indian Subcontinent he opposed innovations in religion and sanctifying saintly people, who were already dead, and hoping for blessing (*barakah*) by visiting their tombs (Abu Zahra, 2003: 221). Ibn Abd al-Wahhab began to spread his ideology and views through a book, *kitab ut-tawhid* (the book of monotheism), and to invite people to the true religion by giving up *shirk* or association and *bid'a* or innovation (DeLong Bas, 2004: 68). He insisted that the innovations and *sufi* practices mixed with custom-laden beliefs that had proliferated in the Muslim world had caused the concept of monotheism to be sullied. Ibn Abd al-Wahhab protested against all these above-mentioned practices that were common at that time, and in addition he revived Ibn Taymiyyah's thoughts regarding religious beliefs and practices. The movement played a vital role in the establishment of the Saudi-Wahhabi state in 1744 (DeLong Bas, 2004:23). Today's Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an extension of the alliance between the Saud family and Wahhabi thought. In the second half of the twentieth century, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia followed a 'pan-Islamic' policy in opposition to Nasser's 'pan-Arabism'. The aim was that of spreading Wahhabi *da'wah* into the Muslim world, with the help of oil revenues. Subsequently, in 1962 The World Muslim League was founded, by funding the secretariats of this organisation and many of its institutions. With headquarters located in Mecca and Jeddah,

at reform in Islam were the result of internal factors, whereas, as we have seen in the previous section, in modern times, there are both internal and external factors at work. In what follows I return to the tri-partite division of Muslim responses to modernity mentioned in the Introduction, locating Modernism in relation to two orientations which have actually been more significant in terms of their impact on ordinary Muslim communities both in the Islamic world and its Diaspora: Islamism (sometimes termed fundamentalist, neo-normativist or revivalist Islam) and “Traditionalism” (sometimes termed normative or orthodox Islam).³

1.2.1. Modernist discourse (Islamic modernists and secularists):

Islamic modernism pioneered the reformation of the educational institutions; agitation for liberalization and decolonisation; and the establishment of a periodical press throughout the Islamic world (Kurzman, 2002: 3).

Islamic modernism wants Islam to be the basis of political life as well as religious, but it perceives a need to reinterpret those structures in the light of contemporary needs, frequently with a clear and unapologetic adoption of Western notions (Rippin, 2003: 198).

the WML has become an important tool of Saudi foreign policy, which also promoted later on The Islamic Conference Organisation (Commins, 2006: 112; Abir, 1988: 25).

³ See the works of some analysts including Fazlur Rahman (1979), modernist, fundamentalist and reformist; William Shepard (2004), secularism, islamism, and traditionalism; John L. Esposito (1991), secularists, conservative, neo-traditionist, and Islamic reformist; Youssef M. Choueiri (1990), revivalism, reformism, and radicalism; John O. Voll (1994), adaptationist, conservative, fundamentalist, and the personal and individual; and Charles Kurzman (1998), customary Islam, revivalist Islam, and liberal Islam.

The prevalence of modern values such as rationalism, science, constitutionalism, and certain forms of human rights was also part of the transformation associated with modernity. Those thinkers and activists who adopted such values while remaining self-consciously Muslim can be understood as Islamic modernists. Many Muslims perceived modernity as a Western concept and so regarded it as a threat to their religious and cultural identity. Therefore, amongst Muslim intellectual elites at the forefront of the encounter with the West, it was necessary to explain that modernity was not necessarily in conflict with Islam. The modernists had two main concerns: “reform in education and the need for a new theology” (Masud, 2009: 241). They began the effort to reform the Islamic tradition by reinterpreting its fundamental sources, the *Qur’an*, the *Sunnah* (the Prophetic tradition), *Ijma* (consensus), and *Qiyas* (analogical reasoning), in order to meet the needs of modern society. Initially, modernist thinkers appeared to be advocating Islam’s compatibility with modern science and technology by claiming that the adoption of modern science and technology actually meant reclaiming the Islamic heritage, since modern European science had its origins in classical Islamic learning.⁴ This is evident, for instance, in the writings of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d.1897) in answer to the Orientalist, Ernest Renan, (see Kurzman, 2002: 107-110).⁵

⁴ See ‘Modernism’ in *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Esposito, 2003).

⁵ Al-Afghani criticised the education policy of the Ottoman Government and the Khedivate of Egypt. Although these governments had been opening schools for a period of sixty years, they had never benefited from them because of the non-existence of philosophy in the curriculum. He advocated the necessity in teaching philosophy to prepare students for intellectual thought. Hence, Al-Afghani’s bitter criticism focused on the education policy and orthodox *ulama* (Moaddel, 2005: 87). Moreover, he strongly emphasised that Islam is the closest of religions to science and knowledge, and there is no incompatibility between scientific knowledge and the foundation of the Islamic faith (Kurzman, 2002: 106).

In the Indian subcontinent, one of the most prominent modernists, Sayyid Ahmad Khan (d.1898), demythologized Qur'anic interpretation by presenting it as a harmony of science and reason, criticised the *hadith* corpus, and called for renewed *ijtihad*. According to him, the doctrines of Islam should be based on revelation and *ijtihad*.⁶ In the Middle East, it could be argued, the most influential modernist thinker was Muhammad Abduh (d.1905), and for him moderation was the only alternative. When Islamic law is fully understood and obeyed, society, he believed, will flourish; when it is misunderstood or rejected, society will decay. Reason and revelation are of parallel competence; there is neither separation nor conflict between them (see Rahman, 1982: 63-7; Moaddel, 2005: 89-90). For both, education was a priority. Sayyid Ahmad Khan established the 'Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College' at Aligarh in North India, offering English-medium higher education, and emphasised the importance of education in his journal '*Tahdhib al-Akhlaq*' or Refinements of Morals (Kurzman, 2002: 291). In Egypt, Muhammad Abduh challenged Muslims to bring new curricula into Al-Azhar; his ideas also impacted the oldest and largest modernist organisation in the world, namely the Indonesian 'Muhammadiyah movement' founded in 1912 (Shepard, 2004: 74).

⁶ Another, later, modernist from this region, Muhammad Iqbal (d.1938), has with his rhetorical language exerted a great deal of influence over Muslim intelligentsia and university students. He advocated that the predominantly Muslim regions of North-West India should be governed autonomously under an Islamic system, and thus inspired the Pakistan movement. He proposed an 'Islamic state' model that provided within this political constitution for: a) the law of God as absolutely supreme, and b) the absolute equality of all members of the community (ibid, pp. 304-313). The Islamic state must have absolute equality among all members, with no aristocracy, no privileged class, no priesthood, no caste system, and so on. His views illustrated that he was obviously against any kind of division and discrimination. His well-known work, *the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, is seen as 'the only systematic attempt' (Rahman, 1982:132) to renew Islamic theology and law in modern times.

Modernists reinterpreted *ijma* and *qiyas*; the door of *ijtihad* was pushed upon as human reason competed with the prophetic revelation; the principle of *maslaha* (common good) emphasised public utility; *shura* (consultation) became parliamentary democracy. In seeking to reformulate an alternative method of Qur'anic exegesis, modernist thinkers reinterpreted the scripture in terms of the 'normative' and 'cognitive' standards of the Enlightenment (Moaddel, 2005: 84). Moreover, the modernists issued a general summons for an absolute *ijtihad* that would seek its guidance directly from the basic sources, not bound by the consensus of the existing jurisprudential schools (Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali, and Shafi'i). Furthermore, many modernists, including Rafi al-Tahtawi (d.1873), Chiragh Ali (d.1895), and S.A Khan claimed that there was not much difference between the principles of Islamic law and those of natural law on which the codes of modern Europe were based (Moaddel, 2005: 86; Kurzman, 2002: 277-91). They believed that it was necessary and legitimate to adapt the Islamic law to new circumstances in changing life conditions. Indeed, Chiragh Ali even rejected the *Hadith* as a source of Islamic law:

the only Muhammadan law is the Qur'an; and the Muhammadan common law cannot be called immutable; on the contrary it is changeable and progressive. There is no legal or religious authority that says four *madhabs* are final and no *mujtahid* who could do as the four imams did (Kurzman, 2002: 278).

In brief, the modernists tried to purify Islam from innovations and accretions; and thus to reform the education system in order to re-establish Islamic principles in society and reform Islamic doctrine. In doing so, they gave greater emphasis to

ijtihad rather than *taqlid* by observing the importance of contexts such as climate, history, character, politics, and social circumstances. With regard to the practice of *ijtihad*, “it is supposed to open the way to modernization, and should be restricted to competent religious scholars” (Filali-Ansary, 2003: 25). However, among Islamic modernists, *ijtihad* began to take shape in the hands of non-*‘ulama*. Rahman explains:

The ulama were incapable of this task; this is why modernism, in so far as it existed at all, has been the work of lay Muslims with liberal education. The result was that the movement split into two developments moving in two different directions: one in the direction of almost pure Westernism; and the other gravitating towards fundamentalism, or what has been called ‘revivalism’ (1979: 222).

Here modernism as ‘pure Westernism’ refers to a certain segment of society that advocates a secularity which rejects the claim that ‘Islam is a total way of life’. Most or all areas of public life must be governed by “human reason and initiative, not by the Islamic Shari‘a” (Shepard, 2004:63). For secularists in the modern Muslim world, religion is seen as the biggest obstacle to the progress of the Muslim community. The logic was that if Muslims followed the West’s path, they would progress as the West has. However, as suggested in the previous section, although such views came to held sway amongst the elites who imbibed Western ideologies of nationalism and socialism, they did not ultimately deliver development.

1.2.2. Islamist discourse (revivalist or fundamentalist):

In the modernist approach, intellectuals advocated Islam's compatibility with modern ideas. They emphasised the rationality of Islam and its encouragement of science and knowledge, compared to other religions. This is a tendency discernible too in what Shepard (2004: 70) terms "the less extreme forms of Islamism." Thus the hallmark of the Islamist approach starts in line with that of the modernists, namely that Muslims must return to the original sources of Islam (*nass*, the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*) and the beliefs and practices of the first three generations (*salafu salihin*) of the Muslim community. In fact, as Rahman (1979) maintains above, Muslim modernism was the root of both pure Westernism and a version of modern fundamentalism or Islamism (political Islam) in the hands of scholars such as Rashid Ridha (d.1935), the most influential successor of Abduh. As we shall see, such Islamic revivalism eventually found large-scale and popular manifestation in the movement of the Muslim Brothers (*ikhwanu'l-Muslimin*). With the help of the modern print media, Ridha disseminated 'reformist ideas' through the publication of *al-Manar*, which became a "major factor in shaping Muslim thought from North Africa to Southeast Asia" (Voll, 1994: 162).

Ridha emphasised the importance of renewing current Islam on the basis of the faith of Muhammad and his immediate companions, or *salaf* (elders), a term which gave its name to the school he helped found, the *Salafiyya*. The term *salafi* (literally the predecessor) has a special usage in the history of Islam that includes the era of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, the generation that followed the companions, and in turn the generation that followed them, all together being called *salafu salihin*. Ridha tried to establish the middle ground between the old Muslim

universities (traditionalist *'ulama*) and the excessive secularism of the Westernizers. In so doing, the *Salafiyya* movement moved in the direction of a more rigorous rejection of modernizing adaptationism, and in the direction of pre-modern Wahhabi revivalism (ibid, p.162).

Islamists insist that Islamic law (*Shari'a*) must be followed as a guidance for all areas of life, public and private. Today they commonly call for an Islamic state and the application of the *Shari'a*. In what follows, I will say more about two Islamist reformist movements which further illuminate the particular focus of this thesis, the Muslim Brothers in the Middle East and Jama'at-i Islami in South Asia.

The Muslim Brothers (MB, Ikhwan 'ul Muslimin):

The MB was established by Hasan al-Banna (d.1949) in Egypt, in 1928. A schoolteacher by profession, al-Banna argued that social and religious decadence had resulted in colonialism and Westernisation. He insisted that “the weakness of Islamic society could be cured only by a return to the sources of its strength, the Qur'an and *Sunnah*” (Voll, 1994: 180) building up a mass modern Islamic organisation through a programme of education. The MB's members ranged from civil servants to soldiers, urban labourers to rural peasants, village elders to university students (Euben and Zaman, 2009: 48). The essential message of the MB is simple:

- 1) The rules of Islam and its teaching are comprehensive, organising the affairs of the people in this world and the next.
- 2) The foundation of Islamic teachings is the book of Allah and the *Sunnah*.
- 3) Islam as a general faith regulates all matters of life for every race and community, in every age and era (Voll, 1994: 181).

After securing grass-roots level support for the movement, al-Banna wrote letters to the King of Egypt and of Sudan and to the prime ministers of other Muslim countries (Euben and Zaman, 2009: 56-72), reminding them that Islamic values encompassed every sphere of life. By the late 1940s, it was the largest mass political and social organization in Egypt and began to spread into other Arab countries, such as Jordan, Syria and Palestine. It called for an Islamic order in society, and was banned in Egypt in 1954 (Shepard, 2004: 75). Latterly, however, it has become active once again. In 1948, the MB was dissolved in accordance with a proclamation of the Prime Minister, Nughrashi Pasha, who was thereafter assassinated by one of its members. The next prime minister arranged to have al-Banna himself shot in 1949 ((Euben and Zaman, 2009: 52).

Later on, Sayyid Qutb (d.1966), one of the most influential ideologues of the MB, joined the movement when he returned from America, where he had been sent as a researcher for the Egyptian education system. As a journalist, he wrote a commentary, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an), in gaol where he spent about ten years following Nasser's crackdown on the movement. In 1964, he was released and then re-arrested for publishing *Ma'alim fi'l Tariq* (Milestone or Signposts on the Way), and eventually executed in 1966. Qutb championed a return to 'pure Islam' and a move away from the materialism of the West, which he perceived as contaminating Islam. Allegiance should be to Islam alone, for that provides the perfect social system for all humanity, one which will cure all the ills of the modern world. Once a truly Islamic state is established, all aspects of life will fall into their proper place (Rippin, 2003: 193). For him, social justice is more important than technological, economic, or administrative issues. Thereby, a return to Islamic

principles will restore all spheres of social life. According to Lapidus (2002: 634), in the 1970s, a group called *Jama'at al-Islamiyya*, which were student associations dedicated to the Islamization process, carried on the principles of the Muslim Brothers to recreate an Islamic society based on a restored caliphate.

Jama'at-i Islami (JI):

The JI was founded in 1941 by Abul A'la Mawdudi (d.1979) in pre-Partition India, and has ideological connections with the project of the MB. Mawdudi studied *dars-i nizami* from Deobandi 'ulama in Fatihpuri Seminary where he received his *ijazah* (certificates to teach religious sciences) in 1926 (Nasr, 1996:18), but he also gained a modern western education (Geaves, 1996:179) and worked as a journalist. The last decade of British rule in India, with its attendant anxieties over the future of Muslims, induced Mawdudi to develop the political dimension of his Islamic vision. He told Muslims that they were a separate nation in India, but not in the European sense suggested by the (modernist) all-India Muslim League. Mawdudi argued that the way to carry this message forward was to establish not a nation state, but an Islamic state in which every constitutional part would reveal Islam in both ideal and practical manifestations.

Like al-Banna, Mawdudi's call was for a return to the Qur'an and a purified *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad so that Islam might be revitalized; this could only truly happen if Islam became the constitution of the state (Rippin, 2003: 193). Thus, the *Shari'ah* had to be fully restored and all laws from other sources repealed in every sphere of social life. According to Mawdudi, Islam is a complete way of life,

regulating all aspects of life; and the *Shari'ah* does not recognise any division between state and religion, this being a western invention (see Geaves, 1996:183).

Mawdudi's political vision is based on religious doctrines that have the notion "God alone is sovereign" (Robinson, 1988:18) as their nucleus. Men have gone astray because, "nationalism, secularism, and western models for democracy are all based on the idea of sovereignty of people" (Geaves, 1996:183). Furthermore, he saw problems in Islamic faith and history. He argued that "original true faith had been corrupted by later accretions, leading to *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance, paganism in pre-Islamic faith) and *kufir* (disbelief)" (Nasr, 1996:59). All worldly matters directed the Muslim's attention from the divine to the mundane. Political power is essential to change this situation and reveal Islamic faith. The state is merely God's vice-regent (*khalifa*) on earth (Robinson, 1988:18).

The state would be ruled by an *amir* in consultation (*shura*) with a council (Geaves, 1996:184). This is the same as the JI's structure. This model is that of 'theo-democracy', based on the equality of all Muslims under the sovereignty of Allah. Legislation takes place in four ways: "by interpretation, analogy, inference, and independent judgement" (Robinson, 1988:19). In the interpretation of the sources, Mawdudi avoided following any school of law (*taqlid*), de-emphasising theological and legal differences in favour of a systematic reading and regimentation of the religious sources (Nasr, 1996:61).

To reach 'true' Islam, such as in the reign of the Prophet and his rightly guided caliphs, is merely a matter of purifying Islam of customs and innovations. Education was a primary agent for Islamic revivalism. The JI created its "student union, Islami

Jamiat-i Tulabah, to spread Mawdudi's influence to Pakistan's future leaders" (ibid, 77). Although the JI had small numbers, it played a substantial role in directing Pakistan away from developing into a secular state in favour of becoming an Islamic state. For instance, some of its leaders became ministers under Zia ul-Haq (Geaves, 1996:186), and arranged several changes (albeit superficial ones), were based on *Shari'a* under the headings of law, economy and education. Nonetheless, as a political party, the JI has not been successful at the polls as a result of the movement's failure to spread its ideology to "most of Pakistan's rural voters, who comprise some 70 per cent of the population" (Lewis, 1994:43).

Mawdudi gained a religious education; but, he was not from among the *'ulama*. He criticised the *'ulama*'s view about the closure of the *ijtihad* gate. He advocated that this door was still open and that whoever had a qualification in Islamic sciences could exercise *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning). He also "derided the *'ulama* for their moribund scholastic style, servile political attitudes, and ignorance of the modern world" (Nasr, 1996:116). However, Mawdudi was accused of breaking with traditional orthodoxy by some Deobandi *ulama*- for example Manazir Ahsan Gilani- and this accusation was shaped later by severe *fatawa* (plural form of *fatwa*) against the JI. Nasr further states:

Additional *fatawa* came from Saharanpur, Malabar, and Lucknow, accusing Mawdudi of giving unorthodox Qur'anic and hadith interpretations, departing from the norms of Hanafi Law, issuing unorthodox religious verdicts, belittling the importance of the Prophet, insulting the companions of the Prophet, indulging in Wahhabism, sympathising with the Ahmadis,

and having Mahdiist⁷ pretensions, and, in some cases, demonstrating Khariji tendencies (1996: 118).

Finally, Mawdudi came under attack from all the schools and groups of *‘ulama* in India and Pakistan.

1.2.3. Traditionalist discourse:

Despite the intellectual and activist efforts of modernists and Islamists to engage modernity directly, the majority of the Muslim masses have remained loyal to religious beliefs, practices and structures of authority inherited from the past. In late modernity mass education and modern technologies have made available the religious texts and sources to an ever-growing number of Muslims, thus further challenging the privileged access of *ulama* to these sources. As Eickelman suggests, modernity sees an “enlargement of human freedoms and an enhancement of the range of choices as people begin to take charge of themselves” (2000: 121).

The focus here is both “conservative Ulama and members of Sufi orders” (Shepard, 2004: 81). Traditionalists maintain that today Islam should be based on traditional sources including the Qur’an, *Sunnah* and, crucially, the accumulation of Islamic tradition. Consequently, traditionalists believe that there is no need to change social institutions or educational systems; the gate of *ijtihad* is closed, as Islamic law achieved its peak with the four jurisprudential schools. In short, traditionalists or what may be better described as ‘adaptationist neo-traditionalists’ (ibid, p.81), for even remaining true to the past in a new context involves a reiteration of tradition,

⁷ A Shi’a belief that the last imam Muhammad Mahdi, who is in occultation, will return to save the believers.

are those who keep the traditions of learning, and legitimated popular customs, as a rich heritage. From the beginning of the twentieth century, with the overwhelming effect of Islamist groups mentioned above, the traditionalists have also often preferred to be silent on political issues.

Rather than discussing all traditionalist movements, I am going to introduce in turn the Deobandis (including Tabligh-i Jamaat) and the Barelwis as patterns of traditionalist discourse which emerged in early modern India, since both have been influential in shaping Muslim religious belief, practice and patterns of authority in the context of Britain.

The Deobandi movement and Tabligh-i Jama'at:

Muslims in the Indian subcontinent faced a number of transformations in public life which resulted in various responses to colonialism and British rule. Pre-modern reformist figures, such as Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi (d.1625) and Shah Waliullah of Delhi (d.1762), insisted on preserving religious identity (see Rahman, 1979: 201-3; Geaves, 1996: 130-3) among ordinary Muslims by focusing on religious education. This trend especially gained more importance after the Mutiny of 1857. The *'ulama* tended to move into the small towns (*kasbahs*) such as Deoband, Saharanpur, Kandhlah, Gangoh, and Bareilly, which were less touched by the British presence and were, increasingly, the centres for preserving Muslim cultural and religious life (Metcalf, 1982:85). The North Indian *'ulama*, Muhammad Qasim Nanautvi (d.1877) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d.1905), established a traditional education centre in Deoband, some ninety miles northeast of Delhi, in 1867 (Metcalf, 1982: 88; Robinson, 1988: 4). The school became the pattern for all the other subsequent

madrasahs throughout the subcontinent (Geaves, 1996:147). The movement effectively expanded its network on the basis of this school prototype in many areas of India, so that the total number reached 8934 by the time of its centennial celebration in 1967 (Metcalf, 1982: 136).

Economic independence from the government and funding by public subscription (Metcalf, 1982:97) were what distinguished the school and its success. In addition to the formal organisation of the school which was supplemented by associational ties of origin, educational experience, and the Sufi orders (ibid, p.98), it adopted several modern pedagogical methods, such as “written examinations, syllabi, classroom teaching, attendance registers for students and annual convocations” (Masud, 2002:238). The school was set up to create well educated ‘*ulama* who would become prayer leaders, writers, and teachers, and thus disseminate their learning, in turn. For this reason, as regards the educational system, a curriculum was shaped mainly from the Islamic sciences (*tafseer*, *hadith* and *fiqh*). Students would be trained in the specialism of the three great intellectual centres of North India: in *manqulat*, the studies of Qur’an and Hadith, the speciality of Delhi; and in *ma‘qulat*, the rational studies of law, logic, and philosophy, the speciality of the two eastern cities of Lucknow and Khairabad (Metcalf, 1982: 100). However, they fully focused on the former, *manqulat*. In the school, ‘*dars-i nizami*’, the syllabus of Farangi Mahall in the 18th century, was adopted as curriculum. Its second speciality was *fiqh*, since the Deobandis stressed correct performance of ritual and ceremonial duties rather than the study of jurisprudence. Consequently, this led the school to become a *maslak* (school of thought) that the Deobandis sought to revive religiosity (ibid, p.101). In this process, they claimed both intellectual and spiritual leadership, adopting *Shari‘a*

(Hanafi in *fiqh*, *Ash'ari* in *kalam*⁸) and *Tariqat* (the path of *Naqshbandi*, mainly⁹). While so doing, they issued a considerable number of *fatawa* (legal opinions), understood to be based on the four sources of law (*adille-i Shari'a*), namely the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah*, *Ijma* (consensus), and *Qiyas* (analogical reasoning). Indeed, "From 1911, these fatwas were recorded and published regularly" (Nielsen, 2004:135). Although the Deobandis are labelled by Barelwis as being 'Wahhabi', they never sought to eliminate Sufism but rather to integrate it into an obedient religious life (Metcalf, 1982: 145). Thus, the Deobandis emphasised the importance of all Islamic knowledge accumulated over the centuries and followed established Sunni schools of law in beliefs and practices.

As an offshoot of the Deobandi movement, the Tabligh-i Jamaat (TJ) was founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas (d.1944) near Delhi in 1926 (Robinson, 1988: 15). It is also known as "the faith movement" (Lewis, 1993: 16) and could be said to be the activist form of the Deobandi movement. TJ's work began in the region of Mewat, whose indigenous people were far from Islamic in belief and rituals because of the influence of Hinduism and Shi'ism. "M. Ilyas believed that the British were the main opponents of Islam, but he never allowed himself to be drawn into political activity"(Geaves, 1996:154). He thought that every Muslim had a responsibility to generate an awareness of Islam in others, and believed that if Muslims adopted the following practices, they would be successful in their religious life:

⁸ As regard as the faith sects, dominant sects, Maturidiyya and Ash'ariyya still construct the main bulwark of orthodoxy in Sunni Islam.

⁹ The Deobandis were not totally against Sufism, since they had close relationship with *Naqshbandi* Sufi orders, such as Haji Imdadullah (See, Metcalf, 1982: 158; Geaves, 1994: 179).

1) Inculcating missionary spirit, 2) acquiring and transmitting Islamic knowledge, 3) enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong, 4) working together in mutual love (Robinson, 1988:15).

TJ are well organised in preaching and missionary tours, which consist of an *amir* (leader), a *mutakallim* (speaker), a *rahbar* (guide), and the size of the team can range from three to ten (Geaves, 1996:153). The aim of TJ is the same as the Deobandis, to practice religion and preserve religious identity. A substantial difference, however, is that the TJ has been successful in transforming itself from a local into a global movement. Volunteers under the leadership of experienced Tablighi preachers go from house to house, inviting Muslims to attend the mosque and to learn how to pray. Typically, they avoid religious controversy and political issues and focus on personal religious observation.

The Barelwi movement:

The name Barelwi comes from this movement's charismatic founder, Ahmad Riza Khan (d.1921), who was from Bareilly, a town in northern India (Sanyal, 1996). As an *'alim*, his scholarly defence of the Sufi way of life was the basis of the movement. The Barelwis claim that they are *ahl al-sunnat wa'l jama'at* or people and community of the prophetic path (Sanyal, 1996: 166; Geaves, 1996: 103). This allows them to counter the reformist groups' central criticism that their Islam is impure and full of innovations (*bid'ah*) and cultural accretions. On the contrary, they accuse the Deobandis and Jama'at-i Islami of being Wahhabi. This kind of "fatwa war" (Lewis, 2002:40) is still ongoing.

The Barelwis are often described as a reaction to other reform movements such as the Deobandis and Ahl-i Hadis (Geaves, 1996: 95), but Metcalf (1982: 296) argues that “like the other two, they offered religious guidance to their followers.” The Barelwis used their legal scholarship “to justify Islam as it had been handed down- a custom laden Islam which was closely tied to the Sufi world of the shrines where believers sought help from saints to intercede for them with God” (Robinson, 1988: 8). Unlike the Deobandis, the Barelwis were not so hostile to their colonial rulers for the threat they posed to Islamic culture (Geaves, 1996:95).

Ahmed Riza Khan’s teaching places, first of all, great emphasis on the pre-eminence of the Prophet. He stressed the Sufi concept, the light of Muhammad, which is derived from God’s own light (Metcalf, 1982:301; Robinson, 1988:9; Geaves, 1996: 95). He denied the charge of the ‘Wahhabis’ that this theory compromised the unity of God. Instead, he insisted that the Prophet was himself light, “present and observant (*hazir u nazir*) in all places. He was human but his humanity was of a different order from that of other men. He was also given unique knowledge of the unknown (*ilmu ’l-ghayb*)” (Metcalf, 1982:301). All these understandings are based on the chapter of *Najm*, which give details about the Prophet’s attributes, in the Qur’an. Therefore, the Prophet could be called upon to intercede (*tawassul*) for human beings with God (Robinson, 1988:9). Furthermore, the Barelwis showed a great deal of respect for Sufi orders and *awliya* (Sufi *pirs* and saints), such as “Abdu’l-Qadiri Jilani, who lived in the twelfth century and was regarded the last great *ghaus* [helper] which is coming from the Prophet and his rightly guided caliphs and his descendants through Ali, Hasan and Husain” (Sanyal, 2005:94).

The Barelwis focused on daily religious life instead of opening schools. However, after the death of Riza Khan, the success of the Deobandis encouraged them to establish schools to train *'ulama*. In the meantime, the movement spread its institutions both inside and outside of South Asia. As with the Deobandis, the Barelwis insisted on following the four schools of law in Islamic beliefs and practices.

1.4. Conclusion:

The nineteenth century saw the conquest of Muslim lands by Western imperial powers - British, French, and Dutch – and the transformation of Islamic societies in economic, political, social and cultural terms. To recall the response of Muslims to modernity according to the content and style of their message, it is the modernists who have represented liberal intellectual thinking; Islamists are more or less puritanical revivalists who reject blind and unquestioning adherence to the legal rulings of theologians-jurists of the medieval Islamic era and in the twentieth century advocated for an Islamic state; traditionalists emphasise the status quo of Islamic scholarship, teaching and preaching. Unlike modernists and Islamists, they follow the rules of the schools of theologians-jurists of the medieval age, and see them as 'religious authority' after the Qur'an and *Sunnah*.

Chapter 2

The Muslim Diaspora in Britain

In the previous chapter, I examined the encounter of Muslims and colonial modernity with reference to the response of reformist and traditionalist Islamic movements from both the Middle East and the Indian Subcontinent. Colonial connections were at the heart of the economic migration of “over twenty million” Muslims (Nielsen, 2004:161) to Europe in the postcolonial period, with the social, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity of Diasporas constituting a microcosm of the global Muslim community (*ummah*). This chapter contextualises the Muslim presence in the UK, beginning by examining the significance of the concept of ‘Diaspora’ which is important because its terminological scope widened with later additions, such as ‘guest-workers’, ‘immigrants’, and so on (Vertovec, 1999). I continue by reviewing the migration process and how Islam has been institutionalised in Britain, dwelling in particular upon the dynamics of reformist and traditionalist movements, including their ongoing influence on the representation of Islam in national-level umbrella organisations, which have been unable to entirely transcend intra-faith polemics. The chapter concludes by pointing forward to my main concern in this thesis with Sunni Muslim beliefs and practices, and the issue of religious authority in the context of Britain.

2.1. Muslim migration to Britain and the process of settlement:

In the post-colonial era, economic globalisation has been one of the most influential factors shaping the inter-relationships of Muslims with other countries. There has been massive migration from Muslim lands to Europe, for example from the Indian subcontinent to Britain, from Algeria to France, and from Turkey to Germany. Since the 1960s and 1970s the terminology surrounding migration has increasingly been expanded. In addition to the term ‘migration’, which simply suggests movement from one location to another, ‘Diaspora’ and ‘trans-nationalism’ have also come to prominence since the 1990s especially (Tölölyan 1996; Cohen 1997; Vertovec 2000; Baumann 2000). Sean McLoughlin (2005a: 527) examines the historical usage of such terminology, and argues that social groups such as ‘immigrants’, ‘ethnic minorities’, ‘exiles’, ‘expatriates’, ‘refugees’, ‘guest-workers’ and so on, have all been re-imagined as ‘Diasporas’ today. However, Diaspora is best understood in terms of continuing consciousness of an ethno-national homeland. Furthermore, in a globalized age, rapidly changing communications technology enables people (including Diasporas) to maintain contact with others around the world more quickly and easily than in the past. Under these conditions, he states, “Diasporas can become ‘*trans-national*’” (2005a: 527), that is simultaneously rooted in more than one place across the borders of nation states through circulations of people, goods, money and ideas. As compared to container models of the nation-state, Mandaville argues that:

Transnationalism provides a better way of understanding social formations organised across or beyond various territorial polities, it also provides a better account of Muslim politics under globalising conditions. (2007: 276)

Religions may not constitute Diasporas themselves, but being ‘cognate phenomena’ in the theory of Robin Cohen (1997: 187), they provide ‘additional cement’ and serve to enhance the social cohesion of ethnic groups which remain crucial to the understanding of Muslim minorities.

In the context of Britain, Geaves (2007) studies the relationship between religion and ethnicity further, and points out the three major categories requiring elaboration: ‘ethnic culture’ (for example, Pakistani, Indian, and so on), ‘Qur’anic Islam’ (and Islamic ‘orthodoxy’ more generally) and ‘British culture’. The interaction of these three categories, produces various outcomes and tendencies shaped by generation and other factors. Furthermore, Geaves states:

In the first stages of migration, the major interactions take place between British culture and ethnicity. Islam principally plays a functional role as a marker of identity as first-generation Muslims engage in micro-politics focused on community building. However, the second generation find themselves drawn towards British identity as a natural allegiance of birth and as a result of socialisation processes. However, the tensions that can exist between the loyalties of parents towards ethnic identity at the place of origin and the social norms of the new culture can be very difficult to negotiate. Thus, we find British-born Muslims beginning to move away from the engagement between ethnic cultures and to develop a discourse based on religion as their primary identity (2007: 18).

Thus, “religion as passive instrument of ethnic identity” (Knott, 1992: 5) has shaped and continues to shape ‘British-Muslim’ identity but the dynamics are changing.

Reformist and traditionalist movements find a new voice among those religiously serious second- or third-generation British-born Muslims. Nevertheless, the increasing emphasis on religious identity itself produces quite different Muslim orientations, rather than one single Muslim community of Britain.

As McLoughlin (2005a: 540) has pointed out, the particular contexts of migration and settlement have a number of consequences in the Diaspora. Muslims initially came to Britain as sailors and travellers in the sixteenth century, and a century later, it is reported that more than 40 Muslims were residing in London and working as tailors or shoemakers (Ansari 2004). These early migrants were from Ottoman territories, and their presence was a direct result of interaction between the British and Ottomans. In addition, the British extended their power over those Muslim lands in South Asia and, with the opening of Suez Canal in 1869, in the Middle East and Africa (Ansari, 2004: 27-8). Seamen from Muslim colonies such as Yemen, Somaliland, Malaya, and India (Ansari, 2004: 36) travelled to Britain, as did servants, nannies, soldiers, and so on. Muslims stayed mainly in port cities such as Liverpool, Cardiff, Glasgow, or South Shields. In between the two world wars, former seamen and soldiers especially moved into the Midlands, Yorkshire, and Lancashire, finding jobs in textile mills as unskilled or semi-skilled employees (see Ansari, 2004: 47; Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 42-3). It was these pioneers who formed the bridgeheads for later settlement, especially amongst South Asian Muslims.

In the second half of the twentieth century, labour migration from Muslim lands was the most significant movement into Europe: Turks to Germany, North Africans (especially Algerians) to France, and South Asians (Pakistanis, Indians and Bangladeshis) to the UK (Nielsen 2004: 161). All migrated in order to fill the labour

shortage in these industrialised European countries. In Britain, the immigrants, often peasant farmers, were generally from rural regions such as Mirpur in Pakistani administered 'Azad' Kashmir and Sylhet in Bangladesh (Ballard, 2002: 5). Operating as international commuters, men came to industrial cities for a number of years to earn money and send remittances home before returning there only to be replaced by a kinsman.

Roger and Catherine Ballard's migration model (1977: 51) illuminates that, following the pioneers and the international commuters, migrants began to bring their wives and children to the UK and this process continued until the 1980s. Gradually, this process encouraged Muslims to see themselves as 'settlers' rather than 'sojourners' (Lewis, 1993: 37). However, the need was still existing for "networks and institutions which would allow them to carry on practicing religion and culture" (Joly, 1995: 7). Hence the close connections between homeland and diasporic institutions and organisations emerged. Thus there is a tendency to emphasise 'tradition' over 'translation', 'ethnicity' over 'hybridity' (McLoughlin, 2005a:540). Initially, in the early days of migration and in locations where the numbers of Muslims remained small, mosques were shared, as a process of 'fusion-cooperation' temporarily over-rode ethno-cultural and sectarian origins. However, as numbers grew, so did the reproduction of ethnic and sectarian affinity or 'fission-fragmentation' (Lewis, 2002: 56; McLoughlin, 2005a:540), as can be seen in the settlement of Muslims in Leeds (see Chapter 4).

While "disunity because of ethnicity" (Mandaville, 2007: 297) has been a major issue for Muslims from within their own communities, they have often felt themselves as 'other' in Britain, often being employed at the lowest level of the

labour chain and encountering “considerable racial discrimination” from wider society. In seeking to transcend exclusion, Islam has become a key focus for the identity of Muslims in Britain especially when they have been criticised or attacked by others on the basis of their religion, such as over the Rushdie affair, and later ‘9/11’ and ‘7/7’.

2.2. The Institutionalisation of Islam in Britain:

When the Prophet Muhammad migrated from Makkah to Madina in 622 AD, the first task for Muslims was to build up a mosque, which would bring believers together for religious, social, educational, and political purposes. Muslims in Britain adopted the same methodology, initially using houses converted into mosques. The first arrivals were not so much interested in the establishment of religious institutions since they expected to return to their homeland with their earnings (see Geaves, 2007: 15). Later on, as the community developed and families joined the migrants, there was a proliferation of religious institutions throughout Britain. Even purpose-built mosques appeared on the streets of metropolitan cities. The first purpose-built mosque in Woking, the Shah Jahan Mosque, was founded in 1889 (www.shahjahanmosque.org.uk).

Mosques and Islamic schools were a sign that Muslims desired to preserve their religious identity. By 1985, the number of registered mosques was 314, and that figure had risen to 452 by 1990 (Nielsen, 2005: 46). Nowadays, it is estimated that

there are about 1500 mosques (Charity Commission, BMG Surveys of Mosques, 2009), serving Britain's 2.7 million Muslims.¹⁰

As McLoughlin (2005a: 540) states, "the idea of congregation can become more significant than in the homeland, as public meetings for worships provide an opportunity for socialising." In similar vein, Stephen Barton (1986: 179) reports that the mosque he studied in Bradford was a refuge for Muslim immigrants from the stresses of life in British society. In addition to the conventional functions of the mosque (prayer, preaching, religious education), some other roles such as "library, publishing, resolution and consultation centre, social gatherings, marriage, and so on" (Joly, 1995: 75) have been added in Britain. Mosques have also become a sort of representative political medium between local authorities and Muslims, linking with various departments of social services, such as schools, prisons, the police, and hospitals, as well as maintaining interfaith-dialogue with other religions. Consequently, mosques in Britain have become a nerve centre of community life for Muslims in Britain, functioning as a place of worship, a supplementary school for both children and adults, as well as a meeting point for socio-cultural events.

Another important institution is the religious school (*madrassa*) or seminary. In the formative stage of institutionalisation, imams were found among migrants or imported from migrants' countries of origin to work in Britain. Although this continues under the watchful eye of government by "tightening entry controls" (see Birt, 2006: 694-5), community leaders have established educational institutions

¹⁰ This figure is according to the 2011 census data given by Office For National Statistics (ONS). http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?newquery=*&newoffset=25&pageSize=25&edition=tcm%3A77-286262 (Accessed on 13 December 2012)

(Islamic seminaries) for training students in the traditional Islamic sciences with a view to producing British-trained imams and religious teachers. There are now at least 25 seminaries in the United Kingdom, one having been established in the 1970s, three in the 1980s, eighteen in the 1990s and three in the 2000s (Birt and Lewis, 2010: 94). Seminaries are organised in terms of South Asian sectarian traditions. Seventeen seminaries belong to the Deobandi tradition, five are Barelwi, one Azhari, one Nadwi, and one Shi'a. Only five provide education for girls. The age criteria in these seminaries for all students is up to 16 (ibid, p.94). The curriculum and capacity of students who graduate each year can be summarised thus:

Discounting the numbers of women being trained, there are nearly 2,500 young men studying in such seminaries. Considering that roughly half of these students normally go on to pursue the full *alim* [Islamic scholar] course of six years after completing the memorization of the Qur'an (*hifz*), and that the *dar al-ulums* established after 1997 have yet to produce full graduates, a reasonable estimate is that currently around 140 *`ulama* graduate in Britain every year, a small proportion of whom having come from abroad will return home to serve their communities. The potential capacity of the sector is approximately 250 a year, which could be achieved by 2010. (Birt and Lewis, 2010: 96)

Despite this capacity, "85% of the estimated 2,000 British imams are foreign born" even today (Birt, 2006: 694). The graduates take positions in the "prison and hospital chaplaincies" (see ibid, p.698-700) but are sometimes thought too expensive or independent minded to be popular with congregations.

2.3. The Construction of religious identity: Sunni Muslim religious movements in Britain

In the previous chapter, we reviewed three Muslim orientations towards modernity: modernists (including secularists), Islamists (reformists), and traditionalists. In the post-modern period, the religious life of Muslims continues to be shaped by a number of reform and traditionalist movements and having reviewed the background of ‘traditionalist’ Deobandis and Barelwis and the ‘Islamist’ Jama’at-i Islami and Muslim Brothers in the previous chapter, I now focus on their institutionalisation in Britain.

As in British India, so the traditionalist Deobandis “tried to be as independent as possible of the British state” (Modood, 1992: 145). Thus, they focused their effort internally on education by establishing religious seminaries [the overwhelming majority of seminaries, 17 out of 25, belong to Deobandis (see Birt and Lewis, 2010: 94)] throughout Britain. As early as 1967 the Deobandi *‘ulama* founded the Majlis Ulama UK (Geaves, 1996:163), an organisation designed for organising conferences, planning tours of visiting preachers, printing calendars and posters to establish correct times for prayers, and so on. Through the *dar al-‘ulums* and graduates from these schools, the Deobandi movement has contributed disproportionately to the supply of imams and religious teachers. Modood (1992: 145) notes that ‘through active proselytization they build up a mass following as well as an international reputation in Islamic learning’. In other words, through the work of their sister-organisation, Tablighi Jama’at (their work is not only at a local and national level,

but also transnational), the Deobandi movement has become globalised. In national level, however, Yahya Birt states that:

The main challenges for the movement have been firstly to appeal to a younger British-born constituency that is actively disembedding ‘pure’ religion from what is seen as the composite religio-cultural Islam offered by their parents, and secondly to respond to emergent Salafi and Islamist critiques of following religious scholarship (*taqlid*) and failing to take Islamic politics seriously. (2005: 184)

Despite sometimes being characterised as ‘isolationist’ (Lewis, 2002: 219), in the last decade especially through a new generation of activists the Deobandi movement has expanded its interaction and cooperation with the wider society, working with local schools and colleges, promoting community liaison with the police, MPs and policy makers, publishing Islamic literature, public lecturing on Islam, making interfaith and having a support group for drug and alcohol abuse (Birt, 2005: 189). The other traditionalist movement, the Barelwis, are representatives of the traditions of Sufi mysticism from the Indian subcontinent. In Britain, those associated with the movement in some way are probably amongst the largest of British Muslim working class constituencies: “the majority of Pakistanis in Britain are Barelwis” (Modood, 1992: 145). Flexibility is a feature of their behaviour, as is a more positive attitude to the state (Robinson, 1988: 10). The Barelwis do not see living under a non-Muslim state as a threat. Modood states that:

unlike the Deobandis, they are not apolitical [but] they, unlike the fundamentalists, have no political grand plan; under the Raj they cooperated

with and were favoured by British rule...Their religious passion is usually aroused when their doctrines and forms of worship are denounced by Deobandis and fundamentalists as un-Islamic historical accretions. This intense sectarianism has led to and continues to lead to serious violence in Pakistan and there are not many towns in England which have mosques and have not witnessed such a clash. (1992: 146)

In Britain, the Barelwis are divided into several regional groups and in terms of networks associated with particular *pirs* (Sufi masters) and orders such as the “Qadiris, Chishtis, and Naqshibandis” (Geaves, 1996: 101). Geaves quotes one of the leading figures of the movement in the UK, Mawlana Shahid Raza Khan, who hints at why the Barelwis are so fragmented and have struggled to organise themselves as effectively as the Deobandis:

though the ulama believe in tariqas, all is not well within those institutions: existing *pirs* who came here frequently from Pakistan and other parts, they do not hold moral and spiritual values like their ancestors, they want to build school or spiritual centre and uneducated people respond to them warmly, furthermore *pirs* have lack of Islamic knowledge (1996: 102).

In Britain, three factors have sometimes worked together to temporarily overcome the usually disparate nature of the Barelwi tradition:

Reaction to the publishing of Salman Rushdie’s book, the Satanic Verses; fears for the future of the younger generation; the arrival in Britain of resident charismatic *pirs* who are forming powerful groups of Barelwis amongst British Muslims (Geaves, 1996: 105-6).

However, fragmentation and division continues to be a hallmark of the movement.

Thirdly, of all the South Asian Muslim movements, the most comprehensive structure and ethos belongs to the JI, despite its small numbers. However, “with Saudi money and support it is better nationally and internationally, organised than the other two” (Modood, 1992: 147). Until the 1990s, when Middle East origin movements began to have an impact on the UK, reformist and Islamist orientations in Britain were most associated with elite JI-related organisations. Eschewing the project of an Islamic state in the British context, nevertheless “it was the student and young professional migrants of the JI-related organisations who developed a *da‘wah* (mission) strategy based on the creation of a revivalist counter-culture” (McLoughlin, 2005c: 62).

The JI is represented in the UK mainly by four organisations: “The Islamic Foundation (IF), The UK Islamic Mission (UKIM), Young Muslims UK (YMUK), and The Muslim Educational Trust (MET)” (Nielsen, 1989: 232). First, the UKIM, founded in 1962 (www.ukim.org), concerns itself with mosque facilities (prayer, sermons) throughout the country and provides training programmes (*tarbiyah*) for members and associated members to train mentally and spiritually to carry out the work of the movement (Geaves, 1996: 200). Second, the IF which was founded in 1973 (www.islamic-foundation.org.uk) and is currently located in Markfield, about nine miles outside of Leicester, functions as “a training and educational institution; a research organisation; and a publishing house” (ibid, p. 202). For the wider society, it also provides programmes and courses such as a Home Office-endorsed Cultural Awareness Training programme on Muslims in Britain for non-Muslim professionals, and post-graduate degrees in Islamic studies in the Markfield Institute

for Higher Education (MIHE), validated by Loughborough University (McLoughlin, 2005c: 58). Third, there is the YMUK (www.ymuk.net), formed in 1984 on the initiative of 27 young Muslims representing various local youth groups who met in Spencer Place, in Leeds, to form a national organisation (Geaves, 1996: 206). The membership, made up mainly of university undergraduate and post-graduate students in Britain, is involved in activities campaigning for universal aspects of Islam by asserting that Islam is not the property of any particular culture. Fourth, the MET, established in 1996 (www.metpdx.org/index.html), is dedicated to monitoring the requirements of Muslim children in the British school system. Its activities range from providing materials for teachers to give Islamic Studies lessons in English to Muslim children in state schools; publishing books and posters on Islam; to issuing guidelines to that effect on such matters as sex education, diet, dress restrictions and participation in sports (ibid, p. 207- 8).

Having outlined the establishment of the South Asian background movements in Britain, I can now go on to describe some prominent movements originating from the Middle East that have been influential in shaping Sunni Muslim identity in Britain. Either through migration flows or *da'wah* (mission), reformist movements in Britain target a wide range of the ethnic composition of the Muslim communities.

In Britain, as Gilliat-Ray (2010: 71) has claimed that, from the 1970s onwards, Saudi Arabian-backed projects have been presented in terms of 'mission' (*da'wah*), such as the building of mosques and Islamic centres and the large-scale publication of books propagating Wahhabi thought. Madawi al-Rasheed (2005: 156-7) points out the role of important religious institutions financed by Saudi Arabia in London, such as The Islamic Cultural Centre and al-Muntada al-Islami, and their impact on British

Muslims. Furthermore, Birt (2005: 168) argues that, in academic circles, less attention has been given to the implications of the link between the al-Saud family and the Wahhabi *'ulama* for the export of Wahhabism abroad. The Wahhabi *'ulama* were encouraging worldwide mission (*da'wah*) to spread the 'one and true correct Islam' elsewhere. The *da'wah* mission has been supported by British-born graduates from the Islamic University of Medina gaining special training at the faculty of *da'wah*. When they returned to the UK, they formed the Jam'iyat Ihya' Minhaj al-Sunnah (JIMAS) in 1984 as an instrument to disseminate Wahhabism (Birt, 2005:172). Wahhabism is often used synonymously with Salafism,¹¹ the way of life and religious practices of the first three generations of the Muslim community. Birt argues that in recent times all Islamic movements in the UK have had to respond to the challenge to interpretations of Islamic orthodoxy that Wahhabism represents.

Salafiyya and Muslim Brotherhood (MB, *Ikhwanu'l Muslimin*) are other Middle Eastern originated movements operate in Britain. The usage of the term 'Salafi' from pre-modern times onwards is a broad-based Islamic thought that refers to those who try to emulate the first three generations of Muslims. Thus, the term is pervasive in the revivalist and reformist discourses. It cannot be confined to any particular movement or group, given that almost every reformist thought desires to return to a pristine Islam. A Wahhabi, a member of the Jama'ati Islami or Ikhwan'ul Muslimin, or a Deobandi can claim that (s)he has *salafi* thought. "So while *salafis* share a broadly similar ideological orientation, they differ markedly in terms of their methodological strategies" (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 68).

¹¹ Reformist movements, such as Jama'ati Islami and Muslim Brotherhood, also claim that their thought is Salafi or they aim to return to pristine Islam (see Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 68). Throughout this thesis, this claim is also evident from the discourses of these movements.

In the previous chapter, we have seen how the hallmark of ‘Islamist discourse’ is a call for a return to the practices of the ancestors (*salaf u salihin*), and reform (*islah*) of religious practices. Subsequently, the Salafi thought influenced the reformist movements both in the Middle East –the MB- and in the Indian subcontinent – the JI (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 70).

The aforementioned reformist movements from the Middle East share *Salafi* thought in their activities in Britain. The demand for ‘authentic’ Islam (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 71) among British Muslims is similar to the experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’ reform movements. Furthermore, Gilliat-Ray states that social influences have played a role in this regard:

There is rarely meaningful overlap between secular education in mainstream schools, and religious education in *makatib*, sometimes delivered by ineffective religious leaders from the South Asian villages and towns of their parents and grandparents. This dissonance can cause some degree of educational confusion. Similarly, the conservative traditions of parents and grandparents are no defence against the direct or perceived experience of Islamophobia (2010: 72).

In the midst of all the ethnic and sectarian complexities of religious life, there is “the Salafi thought articulated by charismatic religious authority figures” (ibid, p.72). The target of Salafi thought is the younger generation of Muslims from the South Asian background, preferably British-born, who seek a ‘cohesive Muslim identity’, and potential converts who search for a ‘rationalized Islam’ (Hamid, 2009: 392). The

usage of English as a medium plays a pivotal role in that process. Sadek Hamid further states:

Asian Muslim young people tired of “cultural Islam” and a religious leadership that was distant and unable to communicate with them found in the Salafi perspective a “de-culturalised” Islam, an approach to religious commitment that seemed to be intellectually rigorous, evidence-based and free of perceived corruptions of folkloric religion or the “wishy washy” alternatives offered by rival Islamic tendencies (ibid, p.390).

In seeking ‘authentic Islam’, cultural and transported factors in interpreting religion amongst South Asian movements motivated young Asian Muslims to accept Salafi thought. Salafi thought in Britain has also emerged with a particularly virulent anti-Sufi rhetoric, opening up the historic conflicts between the Barelwis and the Deobandis imported from the subcontinent (Geaves, 2000: 53-4).

As for the MB, as Gilliat-Ray (2010: 76) has pointed out the movement “does not officially exist in Britain”. Nonetheless, there are some organisations that derive their inspirations from it. The Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) and The European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR), were both founded in 1997, the former for the political representation of Muslims, and the latter for claiming religious authority for European Muslims. The MAB became prominent in 2002 by engaging with the ‘Stop the War Coalition’, and led to the establishment of the British Muslim Initiative and the Cordoba Foundation in 2006 (Gilliat-Ray, 2010: 76). In the inaugural meeting of the ECFR in London, more than 15 scholars from around the world attended and approved a draft constitution (www.e-cfr.org, accessed on 12

March 2010). The current president is Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, a Qatar-based Muslim scholar with a reputation gained through satellite TV programmes on Al-Jazeera TV.

Finally, some radical political organisations in Britain, such as *Hizb ut-Tahrir* and *Al-Muhajirun*, also share a background in *Salafi* thought. Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT) was founded in Palestine in the 1940s. The founder, Taqi al-Din al-Nabhani, described HT as a political party with Islam as its ideology and with the goal of resuming an Islamic way of life by establishing an Islamic state which will implement Islam and propagate it worldwide (Taji-Farouki, 1996). HT was banned from British university campuses by the National Union of Students in the 1980s and 1990s and is banned from many European countries today (Abbas, 2007: 3-14). A UK splinter group, Al-Muhajirun, was founded by Omar Bakri Muhammad in 1996. He had much success in maintaining the HT's political ambitions and infiltrating university Islamic societies in Britain before its actions began to be viewed with suspicion. Eventually, al-Muhajirun was disbanded by its leader in 2004 (see Wiktorowicz, 2005).

Briefly comparing these movements and their orientations in the UK, it is possible to say that South Asian traditionalists especially have maintained 'isolation strategies', which has sometimes led to them to be hopelessly adrift from contemporary life (Geaves, 2007: 23-4). Differences in the details of religious life are still reproducing a culture of polemics, with one group accusing another of deviating from orthodoxy. For example, the Barelvis identify themselves as *Ahl-as Sunna wal-Jama'at* (Geaves, 2009: 102), the people of the Prophet's way and community, claiming legitimacy and authenticity and being true representatives of Sunni Islam in the UK. This allows them to counter the reformists' central criticism that their Islam is impure and full of

innovations and cultural accretions. By contrast, the Barelwis accuse other reform groups such as the Deobandis and Jama'at-i Islami as being Wahhabi.

Nevertheless, there have also been elements of co-operation and alliance-making in evidence. Going back to the 1970s and 1980s, Modood (1992: 149) argued that JI was in receipt of Saudi money to advance a shared project of *da'wah* (mission). More politically engaged than its traditionalist counterparts (McLoughlin 2005c), JI has nevertheless understood the importance of a working relationship with the Deobandis, a larger constituency with whom it shares a conservative agenda. As for the Deobandis, Birt (2005:174) states, too, that "they have encouraged the younger British-born *'ulama* to accept aspects of the Wahhabi critique of Sufism".

Thus, it is important to note that the categories of traditionalist and reformist overlap sometimes, and the situation on the ground is more complex than that suggested by typologies. For example, the Barelwi and Deobandi movements strictly encourage their members in following a particular school of law, the Hanafiyya (Metcalf, 1982: 141). In that sense, both share a traditionalist attitude. Both also have something in common in imitating *Chisti*, *Qadiri* and *Naqshbandi* Sufi orders (see *ibid*, p.158 for the Deobandis; and Geaves, 1996: 101 for the Barelwis). However, the Deobandis differ from the Barelwis, and oppose some Sufi practices, such as celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad and visiting Sufi shrines. In this regard, the Deobandis approach the Salafi-Wahhabi attitude against mysticism and popular Sufism. Similarly, the JI and the MB share the same thought with the Deobandis, but the JI and MB are against *taqlid*. They insist on disregarding the whole gamut of Islamic thought and practices accumulated over thirteen centuries, as we have already noted above.

2.4. National-level representation and intra-Muslim interactions: who speaks for British Muslims?

In Britain, the first official Muslim representation can be traced back to the establishment of the Liverpool Mosque and Institute (LMI) in 1891. Ansari (2004: 122) notes that its activities, which included lectures and talks, as well as social solidarity (almsgiving to poor and homeless people, regardless of their religion), gradually extended to a national and international audience through subscriptions to its publications from Europe and the Muslim world. This success culminated in the appointment of the LMI's founder, William H. (Abdullah) Quilliam, as *sheikh al-Islam* (religious authority) of the British Isles by the Ottoman sultan (Geaves, 2010). The outbreak of the First World War was a deterioration in the relationship between Britain and the Muslim world, and this adversely affected the LMI and Muslims in Britain. However, as mentioned above, the first purpose-built-mosque in Woking and its offshoot, the Muslim Society of Great Britain, became the symbolic centre of British Islam until the early 1960s, as Ansari (2004: 341) has argued.

As we have seen, when families joined migrant workers in the UK post 1960, there was a mushrooming of mosques and educational institutions in line with ethnic and religious orientations (for example, Indian Deobandi, Pakistani Barelwi). Institutions from the home country were reconstructed in Britain and ethnographic works by Barton (1986), Gilliat-Ray (1994), Lewis (1994), Joly (1995), Geaves (1996), McLoughlin (1997), and Werbner (2002) document this process very well. Ansari (2004: 343) has claimed that external factors also reinforced migrant's emphasis on ethnic distinctiveness: "from 1960s to the 1980s British governments, both local and

national, saw migrants primarily in ethnic terms.” This contributed to the processes whereby Muslim organisations became concentrated in racial and ethnic ghettos. Given the complexities of collective identities and the different contexts in which people live their everyday lives, the common bond of Islam has not always been uppermost for Muslims in Britain. Nevertheless, in seeking to represent a common front ‘beyond sectarianism’ (Lewis 1994) to local councils and wider society, local umbrella organisations such as the Bradford Council for Mosques were established from the 1980s to pursue claims for public recognition in arenas such as education. The Rushdie affair in 1988-89 projected such questions onto the national level for the first time, reflecting both the impact of global Islamic revival upon British Muslims and also frustration with a race relations industry that refused to see Muslims as ‘Muslims’ (McLoughlin 2005c): religion was being emphasised as “a major identity marker around which to organise” (Morey and Yaqin, 2011: 46).

However, if mosques were well established in various local UK contexts, the Rushdie Affair underlined the weakness of Muslim organisations on a national level (McLoughlin, 2005c). The Union of Muslim Organisations of the UK and Eire (UMO founded in 1970) was largely ineffective and came before its time, while the UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs (UKACIA, founded in 1988 as an alliance of some Deobandis and JI in response to the Rushdie Affair) struggled to find a government that was willing to listen in the 1990s. The case of these two organisations illustrated not only that to be successful they would need a receptive audience but also that Muslims would find it difficult to overcome entrenched ethnic and religious difference. The UKACIA, for instance, was in competition with other Muslim organisations such as Kalim Siddiqi’s Muslim Institute. In 1992, he

established the Muslim Parliament “as an independent national forum on which all Muslims, irrespective of denomination or racial origin, can meet to pursue their common objectives.”¹² Such discrete voices and claims of Muslim organisations to represent the whole Muslim community in Britain led to the intervention of the British government. “Conservative Home Secretary, Michael Howard, advised Muslim activists to speak with one voice” (McLoughlin, 2005c: 60).

This intervention prompted the UKACIA to form a National Interim Committee on Muslim Affairs, and the committee then consulted more than 1000 organisations on the need for a new umbrella body to represent Muslims, similar to the Board of Deputies of British Jews (ibid, p.60). Eventually, the committee inaugurated the Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) in 1997. Having more than 500 affiliations¹³ throughout the country, and with the backing of a New Labour government more receptive to Muslim calls for public recognition at the national level, for a time the MCB served as “the Muslim community’s interlocutor with the British government,” (Mandaville, 2007: 295).

However, in the aftermath of 9/11, “the MCB fell out of favour when it did not support the so-called ‘war on terror’,” (McLoughlin and Abbas, 2010: 549), and since then, the relationship between the British government and the MCB has been problematic following various press exposés of the reformist Islamist heritage of

¹² <http://www.muslimparliament.org.uk/history.htm> (Accessed on 10 April 2012)

¹³ See the MCB’s 2009-10 Annual General Meeting report, available on http://www.mcb.org.uk/uploads/AGM_REPORT%202009_2010.pdf (Accessed on 18 March 2012).

some MCB activists in JI and MAB.¹⁴ In 2009, for instance, Communities Secretary, Hazel Blears, suspended all communication for about a year when the MCB's deputy general secretary (Dr. Daud Abdullah) was signatory to a declaration of support for Hamas's military actions against Israel (Morey and Yaqin, 2011: 84). As Philip Lewis (2007: 67) has argued, other significant Muslim groups also felt uncomfortable with the MCB's "conservative rhetoric with the dominance of Deobandi tradition". This culminated, though not very successfully, in the establishment of the British Muslim Forum (BMF) and the Sufi Muslim Council (SMC) in 2005 and 2006, respectively. These two have largely become "home to Barelwis and other Muslims with Sufi networks" (ibid, p.67) but they have not yet sufficiently overcome internal divisions to prove as effective as the MCB on a national level.

It is clear from the above that ethnic and religious diversity is at work here. The common bond of Islam amongst the Muslim community in Britain is often lost in the complexity of ethnic and cultural priorities and political ideologies that engender other unities on a particular matter. To some extent, the British state has sought to do what Muslims could not achieve, by establishing an advisory council that comprises all the groups mentioned above, plus the Shi'a, in the form of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB) (founded in 2006) (Mandaville, 2007: 295). Its executive board consists of members from the MCB, the MAB, the BMF, and the al-Khoei Foundation (an umbrella Shi'a organisation).¹⁵ In spite of the fact that this organisation is mainly involved in mosque maintenance and management

¹⁴ The establishment of the Muslim Association of Britain (MAB) in 1997, mainly consisting of Arab Muslims with "historic connections to the Muslim Brotherhood" (McLoughlin and Abbas, 2010: 549).

¹⁵ <http://www.minab.org.uk/about-us/executive-board> (Accessed on 16 March 2012)

issues, and in training imams to be able to meet the demands of British Muslim society, it could prove a significant space of intra-Muslim dialogue although not on theological issues. Putting aside ‘sectarian’ differences, it aims to meet the needs of British Muslim society. However, on the evidence of this chapter, the MINAB has faced ‘ethnic’ and ‘sectarian’ challenges which the previous national umbrella organisations experienced.

2.5. Conclusion:

Migration is not a new phenomenon for the Muslim community, for even in the early days of Islam Muslims fled from Makkah to Ethiopia and later to Madina in order to emancipate themselves from oppression. In the European context, mass migration to non-Muslim states was a matter of economic necessity. Most migrants sought to earn money and enjoy a better way of life by coming to Europe. Indeed:

Islamic sources allow a Muslim to live in a non-Islamic environment depending on the believer’s intention and under three conditions: to be free to practice, to bear witness to the message and to be useful to Muslims and society as a whole (Ramadan, 1999: 170).¹⁶

Events such as the ‘Rushdie Affair’ and more recently ‘9/11’ and ‘7/7’, have underlined the need for Muslims to unite, defend and better represent Islam in Britain. Indeed, the presence in the UK Diaspora of Muslims from different parts of the world is arguably an opportunity for followers of Islam to better know and understand each other, gaining an experience of intra-religious pluralism. However,

¹⁶ Tariq Ramadan has pointed out that in European societies, at least five fundamental rights are secured: “the right to practice Islam, knowledge, establish organisations, autonomous representation, and appeal to the law” (1999: 136-7).

as we have seen in this chapter, as regards matters of belief and practice, Muslims in Britain are still divided by those debates that were raging in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century India (Metcalf, 1982: 301) and the Middle East.

Nevertheless, as we shall see in Chapters 4 to 7, reformist and traditionalist movements have had a very significant impact on the forging of Sunni Muslim religiosity. The local mosque is a key space in this regard, both for prayers and festivals but also for everyday religious advice. From the mosque and *madrasa*, the circle expands to *Shari'a* courts,¹⁷ *fatwa* centres like the ECFR, and information and advice found on university campuses and the internet. However, before such matters are investigated further, in the next chapter I will address the question of methodology and how I carried out my research among four Sunni Muslim mosque communities in Leeds.

¹⁷ There are about 85 *Shari'a* courts operating across the UK, and some of them (such as in London, Birmingham, Bradford, and Manchester) have been granted official rights to enforce the rulings in family matters with the power of British judicial system, while some others are still operating unofficially. They are dealing with a number of cases ranging from divorce to inheritance. (*The Times*, 14 Sept. 2008, www.timesonline.co.uk accessed on 31 March 2010). Work by Samia Bano (2004) shows how *Shari'a* courts work as a mediation and reconciliation mechanism in British society.

Chapter 3

Methodological reflections on studying Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds

The University of Leeds' Community Religions Project (CRP) has conducted a number of research projects in the field of Religious Studies since the 1980s, exploring the settlement and development of migrant communities in Leeds, Bradford and elsewhere using ethnographic methods. One of the main aims of the CRP has been "to contribute to academic debates about the relationship between religion and ethnicity" (Knott, 1992: 7). In the previous chapter, we have witnessed the importance of ethnicity during the migration and settlement of Muslims in the Diaspora. It was also clear that, in terms of the study of Islam, the CRP-related works of Barton (1986), Lewis (1993, 1994) and Geaves (1994, 1995) have made a defining academic contribution towards the understanding of religious differences associated with key transnational movements in South Asian-heritage British Muslim communities. Studying at the home of the CRP in Leeds, this and other relevant literature prompted me to develop the research questions as previously mentioned in the Introduction to this thesis. As a result, my aims in studying Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds can be summarised as:

- to study various dimensions of religious diversity among Sunni Muslims and reflect upon the theological debates influencing the religious life of Muslims from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

- to compare religious beliefs and practices between four mosques differentiated by ethnicity and sect.
- to examine intra-Muslim relations, for example, concerning the *eid al-adha* (Feast of the Sacrifice).
- to seek for any attempts by Muslims in the city to communicate with the wider society.
- to explore the patterns of religious authority among Sunni Muslims, by examining the views and experience of both religious experts and ordinary Muslims, and to investigate the place of *ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *fatawa* in the life of Muslims as being instruments of religious authority.

In this chapter, then, I reflect upon the various methodological issues raised by the fieldwork I conducted intensively from June 2010 until February 2011, so as to generate the data to help me reach the aims set out above. First of all I describe the qualitative research methods I employed, evaluating in turn my use of participant observation, conducting interviews and gathering more ephemeral material, including a content analysis of internet sites. Then I describe the fieldwork process, my own analysis and ethical issues.

3.1. Research Locations and Methods, Reflexivity and Challenges:

Kim Knott (2005: 245) points out that there are rather different methodological approaches to the study of religions that have emerged in the West in recent decades. On the one hand there is the clearly ‘secular and scientific’ model, while on the other more ‘reflexive’ models reflect a postmodern concern with the contingency of

knowledge. Nevertheless, the study of religion remains multi-disciplinary and benefits from various methods, approaches and standpoints. Following Chrystides and Geaves, this project takes an ethnographic approach:

The social sciences have provided the study of religion with a number of insights into understanding the relationship between religion and society, and have over the years provided their own discourse into drawbacks and problems of gathering data in the field, both quantitatively and qualitatively. In particular, they have offered the study of religion the valuable tools of ethnography so that living religious communities may be explored (2007: 61).

In any social context ethnographers of religion choose a locale, spend time with its inhabitants, listen, watch, question, think, listen again, and then they write reports concerning what goes on there (Spickard and Landres, 2002: 10).

For my research, I chose to conduct fieldwork in Leeds because, firstly, the city has not been the subject of much research on Muslims in Britain (cf. Geaves, 1995) and, secondly, because it includes a Muslim population which reflects more of the ethnic and sectarian diversity of the Muslim Diaspora in Britain than many other locations. My chosen fieldwork locations were predominantly mosques, which are at the heart of Muslim religious life. To begin to think about my research questions, during 2009-10 I visited all the mosques in Leeds, observing the visible religious diversity of their physical space and congregations ritual performances, as well as other differences between them. Thereafter, I created a basic map of contemporary religious diversity and difference among Sunni Muslim communities in the city (a list is presented in

Chapter 4, Table 1). In sum, of the 21 mosques in Leeds, about 18 were identified as serving Sunni Muslims, and from these four were selected as case studies for further investigation. As a Sunni Muslim myself my research involved “close association with, and participation” (Brewer, 2000: 59) in religious ritual and other practices but with the intention of understanding the purpose and meanings of the activities of Sunni Muslim communities in the selected mosques.

As has been documented in Chapters 1 and 2, Britain’s Sunni Muslim communities are diverse according to ethnic and sectarian orientations. Thus, choosing the four mosques, namely Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC; South Asian, Deobandi); Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM; predominantly Arab, Ikhwani/Salafi); Leeds Iqra Centre (IC; South Asian, Jama’at-i Islami); and Leeds Makkah Masjid (LMM; South Asian, Barelwi), provided an opportunity to gain a greater insight into similarity and difference in Sunni Muslim religiosity. I hope to be able to illuminate a better understanding of the real life meaning of religion for both religious experts and ordinary believers alike.

3.1.1. Participant observation:

The purpose of my ethnography, as McLoughlin (2007: 274) has pointed out, is to understand the complexity of ‘Islam and being Muslim’ in different people’s lives. As a Muslim of Sunni Turkish background, my insider status meant that there was no obstacle to me gaining access to mosques in the first instance. The mosques of Leeds are all open to me for prayer and participating in any other events, such as social gatherings, conferences or seminars, special celebrations like the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad (*mawlid/milad*), and festive celebrations. However, from June 2010, I wanted to begin my research in earnest. Therefore, before starting my

fieldwork, I sent an information letter by either mail or e-mail to all four mosque management committees. I received a confirmation e-mail in response only from LGM. The others did not respond, but when I followed up in person they orally informed me that they were happy for me to do research in their mosque. For the observational part of this research, consent could not otherwise be taken on behalf of the congregation as a whole.

My frequent visits to the selected mosques made me familiar to the congregation, and my keen interest to talk with people opened pathways for further conversation. Overtly, I introduced myself as a PhD student at the University of Leeds, and explained my academic and religious background, as a researcher in Islamic studies and as a *hafiz* and ex-imam (in a mosque in Turkey). I approached firstly the mosque imams and had informal conversations as with fellow Muslims. Then I was introduced by the mosque imams to the congregation as ‘a Muslim scholar’ doing a higher degree in the university. To some extent, they acted as gatekeepers for my research. They also participated in my research, though just one did not want to complete the interview. When I was asked about my research topic, some found it interesting; for instance, Sheikh Muhammad (official imam of the LGM and fellow PhD student) commented that examining Muslim communities in Britain and understanding religious diversity was a current issue and an important one in terms of reflecting Sunni Muslim attitudes to living as a minority in a non-Muslim country.

The contacts with mosque imams initiated an informal ‘snow-balling’ (McLoughlin, 2000; Bolognani, 2007) process leading to a contact chain for potential participants among ordinary Muslims. This developed as individuals referred to other fellow Muslims for participation. Indeed, as Bolognani (2007: 284) has pointed out,

“generally speaking the informal snowballing process was far more successful than contacting individuals, associations or mosques through formal means such as letters on University-headed paper”. Nonetheless, it was not always easy to explain the details of the research topic or ethical procedures like taking consent from the participants. Indeed, some ordinary Muslims rejected my invitation for an interview, seeing the research about Muslims as something that was not necessary.

The ethnographic approach consists of both observing and listening to the views of different groups or communities during ceremonies, rituals, and social events (Bryman, 2004: 292), as well as talking to people informally about the context in question. I spent at least one month visiting each mosque, praying the five-times daily prayers with the congregation and spending most of the time between the prayers in the mosque, making informal conversations and recruiting informants for the interview. In doing so, my aim was to see differences and similarities regarding religious observance and rituals between the mosques and to compare them accordingly. It helped me to understand existing differences amongst the Sunni Muslim communities and revisit the literature about them in the context of Britain. I began by observing ritual differences in patterns of daily and Friday prayers and listened to *va‘z*, *khutbahs* or sermons to determine whether their content included anything about religious belief and practices. I attended festive celebrations, too, including *iftar* gatherings during Ramadan, the holiest month in the Muslim calendar, *‘eid* (festive) celebrations, *milad un-Nabi* (the birthday celebration of the Prophet Muhammad), *tafseer* (Qur’anic exegesis) classes at LGM on Monday evenings, and at the weekends in the LIC. In addition, I also attended a number of community

events related to Muslims more generally in Leeds, including those organised by the IC in Leeds Town Hall, as well as interfaith meetings in the LGM and LMM.

Basing myself in the mosques, I took advantage of opportunities to build relationships with the religious experts and members of the congregations before conducting interviews. Nonetheless, to convince other fellow Muslims to participate in the research is not easy, but takes time. Having gained a religious education and had active involvement with Islamic skills such as reciting the Qur'an and making the call for prayer (*adhan*), I was given several opportunities to perform these. In the selected mosques, except the LIC, I called for prayer, and once I recited a passage from the Qur'an in a *milad un-Nabi* programme held in the LMM. After these, it was as if people changed their perceptions towards me, and furthermore, such involvements created a bond of trust and intimacy.

While observing religious rituals and events, I nevertheless avoided note-taking or recording except in relation to the *tafseer* class in LGM since all attendees were allowed to record the talk. However, as soon as a particular program had finished I would start writing up my observations. So, more often than not, I attended religious activities at the mosques just like one of the regular attendees. Nevertheless, in conversation I was overt about my role as a researcher. Moreover, although I am a Sunni Muslim, my Turkish ethnicity and my dress made me noticeable amongst the South Asian congregations of three of the mosques (the exception being LGM, which is more ethnically mixed and is popular with international students from the university). After prayers, several times people approached me to ask who I was, which was helpful to me as a researcher and enabled me to exchange contact details with potential participants. Perhaps my location in the field is best described, then, as

a 'participant as observer' (Knott, 2005: 252). Indeed, while my language skills in Arabic are good, I do not speak Urdu, Panjabi or Bengali. Therefore the research was conducted mainly in English, with some Arabic when appropriate. In all four mosques there are also English translations of the sermon (*khutbah* and *va'z*) on Friday once it has first been delivered in Arabic or Urdu, while at LGM study circles were in Arabic and at LIC in Urdu. I did attempt to learn Urdu, which has some overlap with Turkish, but because of my limited time I abandoned the idea. With the aid of translators in the congregations I was able to understand the gist of topics. In the LMM and IC, study circles on the same topics were available both in English and Urdu.

For me as a Muslim researcher the most challenging part of the research was the ethical problem of approaching Muslim women with a view to them becoming involved in the research. As a Muslim male researcher in the Islamic space of a mosque it was very difficult indeed to approach Muslim women. Available examples show that issues to do with the identity of the researcher have played a significant part in ethnographic studies, but have not created an absolute barrier.

Jeffery (1976) argued that, in a way, being female was advantageous as it provided her with access to areas that would have been denied to men because of *purdah* (gender segregation). Others have argued (Goodwin, 1994) that female outsiders in Muslim societies have been able to interact with both genders by intermittently taking up an 'honorary male' status (Bolognani, 2007: 281).

The fieldwork site is an important factor in that, for instance, a school environment or social life may prove to be a more open space. For instance the ‘honorary status’ of researchers like McLoughlin (1998) as ‘*gora* (white man)’ and Bolognani (2007) as ‘*gore* (white woman)’ can be mentioned here. However, the mosque is a totally different environment, given that the segregation of women from men during prayers and any other activities is a religious norm. According to some Islamic views, it is also forbidden for a man and woman to talk in private unless they are related. For instance, there is a Prophetic tradition (*hadith*) that suggests if a man and a woman are in a place alone, the third person present is Satan, and so there is the possibility of unlawful activities. Being aware of these views, I tried to use the imams of the selected mosques as gatekeepers who might arrange for me to talk with women, but they advised me that it would not be possible. For instance, once in the LGM, during a Ramadan night session after *tarawih* prayer, it was announced that the imam was going to answer questions in the women’s section. Thus, I approached the imam and asked permission to accompany him during this question and answer session in order to see what sorts of questions were being raised. However, acting as a gatekeeper, the imam replied that “the congregation does not accept that” - although he was subsequently accompanied by a member of the mosque committee, which underlined that I did not have such a privileged status. I also sent e-mails with information about my research and proposed interview questions to some Muslim women via a female member of the mosque committee at LGM. However, I did not receive any response, and in the end managed to interview only three Muslim women who are postgraduate students. We met outside the mosque space at the university.

3.1.2. Qualitative interviewing:

During my visits to the mosques, I was preparing the interview questions according to my research questions and provisional chapter themes. I tested whether the interview questions would work or not when I found chances to talk with the congregation in an informal way. When the time to recruit respondents came, I summarised my research project verbally and handed them an information sheet about the research, its purpose and sponsorship, how long the interview would be and what would happen to the data. In the case of those who agreed to be interviewed, around a week later I took their consent by using a form approved by the PVAR Faculty Research Ethics Committee (Appendix C). In being overt about my research and identity, I avoided any deception or lack of informed consent (Bryman, 2004: 511-4). I was also very careful not to invade people's privacy. I did not ask them about the quantity and quality of their prayers, for instance. I also informed participants that they could refuse to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any point. Only one person did not answer certain questions, and in the end they did not give their consent for the interview to be used.

My aim was to interview 10 people in each mosque and, on average, I very nearly achieved this target, completing 10 interviews at the LIC; 11 in LGM; 9 in LMM; and 9 in the IC. This number includes both members of the congregation and the mosque imams and other religious experts (I interviewed one expert twice). The duration of each interview, whether with experts or members of the congregation, was about one hour on average, though several lasted longer than this. In general, the interviews took place inside the relevant mosque outside of times for the daily

prayers. I recorded the interview digitally and saved it to my university folder (for data protection procedure of Leeds University) to be transcribed later for analysis. Whenever I cite them throughout the thesis, the names of interviewees have almost always been anonymised using pseudonyms. Exceptionally, and with their explicit written consent following email exchanges sharing details of the relevant text and quotations to be included in the thesis, I have used the real names of certain well-known local religious experts. These are as follows: Qari Asim and Qari Qasim (imams of Leeds Makkah Masjid), Sheikh Muhammad Taher (imam of Leeds Grand Mosque), Hasan al-Katib (ex-president of Leeds Muslim Forum) and Sheikh Abdullah al-Judai (member of the European Council for Fatwa and Research).

There was no criterion for selection in terms of age for the imams and religious experts, as they are a small (if important) part of the sample and they were recruited on the basis of their official position. Moreover, the interviews with them were fairly structured - a “standardised interview” (Bryman, 2004) – with me asking the same set of questions to all four (Appendix B). In terms of the former group (members of the congregation), approaches to potential interviewees were made after introducing them to my research topic following one of the daily or Friday prayers. The participants were randomly invited to take part in the research, initially through informal talk as fellow Muslim brothers, and then to the extent that the details about me and my research project became a conversation topic. Often, I waited to make sure that a potential participant was a regular member of the congregation in the mosque. I also verified the participant’s religious identity through one of the interview questions. I handed the information sheet to the potential participant, and then awaited his response as to whether to take part or not.

However, interviewing members of the congregation was different from interviewing the imams. A more semi-structured approach was adopted of necessity, with some changes made to questions and sequences according to the participant's education level, for instance. Substitute questions and new topics sometimes emerged during the course of the interview. Some five informal interviews (without recording or note-taking) were also carried out in line with the participants' wishes. As noted already, three of the mosques were predominantly attended by people of South Asian ethnicity, while one was Arab and, as I have already explained, gender was a constraint in terms of recruiting interviewees. In the British context, for instance Gilliat-Ray (1994) suggests that female religious identity, especially with regards to young British-born women, has dramatically changed with the facilities which British modern life and secular education provided. According to her analysis, a tendency seeking authentic Islam independent from cultural practices or ethnic identities is common amongst young Muslim women (Gilliat-Ray, 1994: 176). However, their preferences in seeking religious authority, continuity and change in following a particular school of law (*taqlid*) need to be investigated to see how religious life continues among female Muslims.¹⁸

3.1.3. Collection of ephemeral material:

Content analysis of texts and discourses were also important for this study. I gathered information via the internet and literature (including books in English on religious beliefs and practices, pamphlets, posters, newsletters, and *fatawa*) circulating in

¹⁸ A more recent research, *Women, Leadership and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority* (Brill, 2012) edited by Hilary Kalmbach and Masooda Bano, explores female activities in religious authority and leadership in Muslim majority countries throughout Muslim world and Muslim minority communities in non-Muslim countries. From the latter's context, however, Britain is absent from such a comprehensive research.

mosques and Islamic bookshops. As (Bunt, 2000) has observed, the internet plays a significant role in many Muslims' lives and in numerous organisations by establishing a web presence for Islam, utilising the networking and dissemination possibilities of the medium. The selected mosques have their own websites to communicate with their congregations; these announce important events and activities; store audio and video materials on religious matters or events held in the mosque; and host discussion forums and links to other websites. I regularly checked the mosque websites from the beginning of my fieldwork until submission. Additionally, these websites exhibit *fatwa* in a specific section or under Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and provide links to other *fatwa* websites for more information.

3.2. The process of data analysis and reflexivity of the fieldwork research:

After completing my fieldwork at the beginning of 2011, I began transcribing the interview recordings into textual form. There was some speech recognition software, for instance Dragon, which is supposed to transcribe digital voice recordings into text. However, this was not reliable since it created irrelevant content from the original voice recording. Therefore, I transcribed the interview recordings manually over a period of about one and a half months. While this is time-consuming, as all researchers know, many ideas concerning analysis came to the fore during the process: for example, in terms of constructing the organisation and content of the fieldwork chapters. As I went through the material I highlighted key passages in

interviews or key events that could be quoted in discussing the key themes in particular chapters.

The interview questions were already planned according to the key themes mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter. Therefore, I was able to sort or code the responses into categories fairly easily, cross-referencing them with coded events described in my field-notes and ultimately deciding on what to focus on in each chapter. For instance, observing the celebration of *'eid al-adha* (the Feast of the Sacrifice) in November 2010 on different days prompted questions to ask of both ordinary Muslims and religious experts. The attempts made by the mosque imams and committees to agree on the same day for the *'eids* were revealed through the interview questions, so that the informants shed light on this particular topic. As a case study, I reflected upon the incident from its various theological and sociological aspects, analysing the content of what people perform as far as their religious beliefs and practices are concerned.

I was able to complete the picture by bringing the responses to certain questions and clusters of questions together, and so tried not only to analyse the picture in general terms across Sunnis in Leeds, but also in terms of particular ethnic and sectarian mosque congregations and in terms of different age groups (the younger generation aged between 18 and 40, and the older generation aged 40 plus). I should add that, while I was aware of electronic programmes used to code and analyse data, such as NVivo, I heard from other researchers that it is not always reliable and judged in the end that it would not deliver significant benefits over traditional methods. Reading fieldwork notes and interview transcripts repeatedly makes it possible to see various issues by looking at them from different angles. Indeed, it is an ongoing process, and

so during the writing-up period I constantly found myself having to go back to the fieldwork materials, and if necessary went back into the field to verify matters through observation or asking questions.

Despite my being a Muslim, to reflect on the facts is the task for my researcher identity as a scholar in the study of religion. I therefore tried to be “neutral with regard to questions of truth, maintaining ‘methodological agnosticism’ (Chryssides and Geaves, 2007: 40)”. Furthermore, coming from a different ethnic background and studying Muslims from the South Asian and Arab backgrounds enabled me to be suitably ‘distanced’ in my interpretation and assessment.

3.3. Conclusion:

‘Being there’ for me as a Muslim researcher means exploring the complex structure of Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds in terms of religious beliefs and practices. In the above sections, I have discussed my ethnographic experience of conducting fieldwork research in four of Leeds’ mosques. As a ‘participant observer’, my observation of religious rituals and practices and seeking the meanings of them from a theological point of view contribute to a better understanding of the religious complexity of Sunni Muslims in a local context. Face to face rapport between the informants and the researcher during structured interviews verified the data gained by participant observation. Collection of additional material in the fieldwork sites provided further information for the research. The fieldwork experience and methodological strategies are peculiar to the researcher and can give valuable insights to others in the field.

Having provided this methodological commentary on my fieldwork experience, in the four chapters that follow I contextualise, describe and analyse the findings of my fieldwork. In turn, my discussion of Sunni Muslims of South Asian and Arab heritage in Leeds dwells upon: i) a general mapping of religious diversity in belief and practice across the four mosque case studies; ii) an assessment of the state of intra-Muslim relations and co-operation with reference to a case study of *'eid al-adha*; iii) an investigation of the main sources of religious authority for members of the four mosque congregations, with a contrast drawn between imams and more specialised scholars and the internet; iv) an examination of the significance of *taqlid*, *ijtihad* and *fatawa* for different Muslim groups in the city.

Chapter 4

Religious diversity and difference among Sunni

Muslims in Leeds

When researching Muslims in non-Muslim countries like Britain, “many Islams” (el-Zein, 1977) or “Muslim communities” (from different geographies and cultures) are often found in the same location. The factors behind the creation of such plural discourse are fundamentally to do with the ethnic and religious divergence of the Muslim community in the UK Muslim Diaspora. Research about Muslim communities in Britain by Lewis (1993) and Geaves (1994) has been especially important in terms of defining different religious tendencies in this regard, such as the differences between Muslims influenced by the *Deobandi*, *Tabligh-i Jama‘at*, *Barelwi*, and *Jama‘ati Islami* movements (see Chapters 1 and 2 above).

This chapter aims at demonstrating the religious diversity of the Sunni Muslim community in Leeds, which is also ethnically diverse. My main concern is to study religious life within the Sunni Muslim community in a non-Muslim country. In doing so, I will reflect on my observations and fieldwork experience gained during this research to examine Muslim diversity in terms of the religious belief, practices, and religious rituals in four different mosque communities, namely Leeds Grand Mosque, Leeds Makkah Masjid, Leeds Islamic Centre, and Leeds Iqra Centre. This is because the mosque is crucial in shaping religious identity and community development as Gilliat-Ray (1994: 205) has argued in the context of Britain.

Initially, I will map out Muslim diversity in Leeds by giving a brief history of migration and settlement, and attempt to categorise Sunni Muslims according to group orientation, both ethnic and religious. I shall introduce the four mosques, each of which represents a certain ethnic and religiously oriented congregation. In doing so, I am going to seek to identify any religious differences by comparing the beliefs and practices observed in the mosques. In the second section of this chapter, I am going to discuss briefly the debates and discourses on religious beliefs and practices among Sunni Muslims in Leeds. For that, I will benefit from the views of both ordinary and expert Muslims from the four different mosques, in matters of daily faith, practice and religious rituals.

4.1. Muslims on a local scale: Muslim diversity in Leeds

According to the 2001 census, there were about 21,394 Muslims in Leeds,¹⁹ amounting to 2.99% of the whole population in the city. A decade later, the number of Muslims has reached to 40,772 according to the 2011 census,²⁰ being 5.4% of the city's population. In one of the CRP's research papers, *Muslims in Leeds*, Ron Geaves states that in the censuses of 1971 and 1981 there was no question on religious identity. Although the 1991 census had a new question regarding ethnic origin, it did not address religion; nevertheless, it did become clear that the number of people of South Asian heritage was 20,996, of which 47% were Indian, 44% Pakistani, and 9% Bangladeshi. It is estimated that Muslims from India are a small minority, while the majority of Muslims in Leeds as elsewhere in the UK are from

¹⁹ See http://www.leeds.gov.uk/Community_and_living/Religions_faiths_and_beliefs.aspx (Accessed on 24 March 2011)

²⁰ See <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-286262> (Accessed on 13 December 2012)

Pakistan and Bangladesh. The 2001 census gives the following figures for the number of other religious minorities living in Leeds: Hindus (4,183), Sikhs (7,586), and Buddhists (1,587).²¹ These figures in total are about half of the size of the Muslim population in the city. When we consider the 2011 census data, the above figures had risen to 7,048; 8,914; and 2,772 respectively. Therefore, the last census provides figures for ethnic groups, such as Indians 16,130; Pakistanis 22,492; Bangladeshis 4,432; Arabs 3,791; and so on,²² that make it impossible to identify the exact number matching with the number of Muslims.

I can say from my own observations and experience of living in the city over about five years, from 2007 to 2012, that the Muslim population in the city is increasingly multi-ethnic (e.g. not only Pakistani and Bangladeshi, but Arab, Turkish and Kurdish). The categories in the last census about ethnicity, such as mixed, white Asian, black African, and other ethnicity, are ambiguous in defining the number of other ethnicities such as Turkish, Iranian, and Kurdish. However, the multi-ethnic Muslim population in the city conforms to the general pattern of Muslim communities in other metropolitan cities such as London, Birmingham, and Bradford.

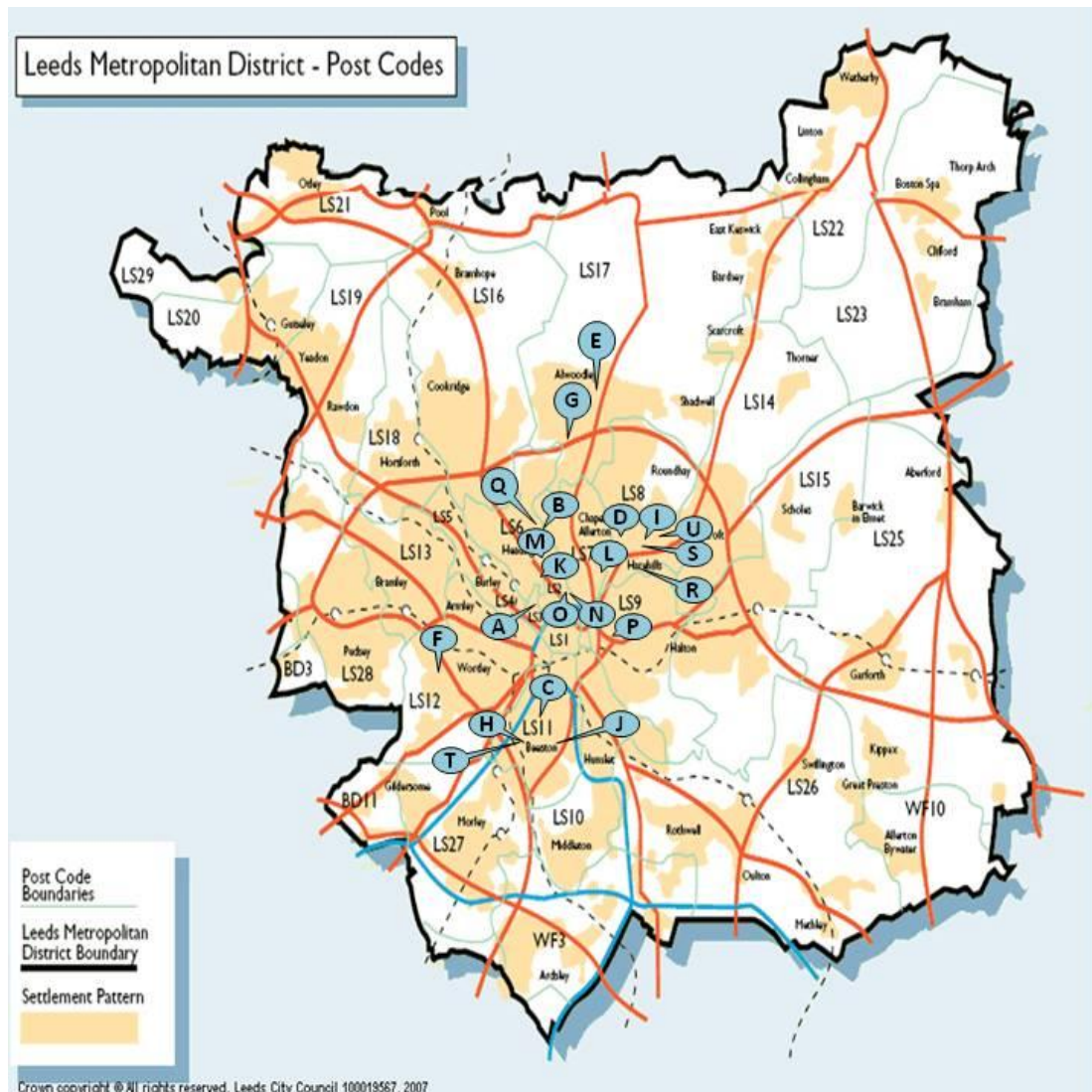
When we examine religion, too, we can see a multi-faceted Islam throughout Britain. The main division is between its Sunni and Shi'a branches. The latter is always a minority except in Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Azerbaijan, and Bahrain, and the Shi'a Muslim population in Leeds shows the same characteristics as elsewhere in the

²¹ http://www.leeds.gov.uk/Community_and_living/Religions_faiths_and_beliefs.aspx (Accessed on 19 November 2011)

²² <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcn%3A77-286262> (Accessed on 13 December 2012)

world, being a minority within the Muslim population. There are about 21 mosques in Leeds (see Table 1 below); and just three of them belong to Shi'a Muslims. My research has not investigated Shi'a Muslims, but rather focuses on the Sunni Muslim community in the city.

Figure 1: A map of Mosque Distribution in Leeds (mosques signalled here by letters are identified in Table 1)



The main map is retrieved from http://outsizesfiles.leeds.gov.uk/maps/leeds_pc.html, and used with the permission of Leeds City Council.

Table 1: Mosque list in Leeds

Mosque name	Location	Ethnicity	Sect	Fiqhi madhab	Religious orientation	Capacity
A) Ahlul Bayt Islamic Centre	LS3 1BQ	Arab, Iranian	Shi'a	Ja'fari	Imamiyya	450
B) Al-Madina Jamia Mosque	LS6 1HR	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Sufi-Barelwi	900
C) Al-Madina Mosque	LS11 5JF	Bangladeshi	Sunni	Hanafi	Deobandi	100 (men only)
D) Al-Towbah Masjid	LS8 5AJ	Somali, Arab, Pakistani	Sunni	Mixed	Salafi	120
E) Baab-ul-Ilm Muslim Com. Of Metro	LS17 8AD	Pakistani	Shi'a	-	Twelvers	250
F) Ghousia Mosque	LS12 2BX	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Sufi-Barelwi	700
G) Iqra Centre (UKIM)*	LS17 5DH	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Jama'ati Islami	200
H) Jamia Masjid Abu Huraira*	LS11 6BJ	Pakistani, Kashmiri	Sunni	Hanafi	Sufi-Barelwi	400
I) Jamia Tul Batool	LS8 4EJ	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Sufi	200
J) Khoja Shi'a Ithna Asheri Mosque	LS11 8BD	Indian-Pakistani	Shi'a	-	Twelvers	250
K) Leeds Grand Mosque*	LS6 1SN	Multi, mainly Arab	Sunni	Mixed	Mixed (Tradition, reform.)	750
L) Leeds Islamic Centre*	LS7 4BR	Pakistani, African	Sunni	Hanafi	Deobandi	4700
M) Leeds Makkah Masjid*	LS6 1JY	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Sufi-Barelwi	2700
N) Leeds Met. Uni. Islamic Society (2)	LS2-LS6	Multi-ethnic	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	200
O) Leeds Uni. Islamic Society	LS2 9JT	Multi-ethnic	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed	250
P) Lincoln Green mosque	LS9 7LY	Kurd, Arab	Sunni	Mixed	Mixed	300
Q) Makki Masjid and Madrasa	LS6 1NP	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Deobandi	350 (men only)
R) Markazi Jamia Masjid Bilal*	LS8 5JH	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Sufi-Barelwi	3200

<i>S</i>) Masjid Quba	LS8 4LG	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Deobandi	300
<i>T</i>) Masjid-e-Umar	LS11 6JG	Pakistani	Sunni	Hanafi	Deobandi	560
<i>U</i>) Shah Jalal Mosque*	LS8 4JH	Bangladeshi	Sunni	Hanafi	Deobandi	810

Note: The table has been created based on my personal observation and data provided by <http://mosques.muslimsinbritain.org/maps.php> (Accessed on 05 June 2012)

**Conforming to one or more of Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB)'s five self regulation and standards.²³*

The above Map 1 shows mosque distribution in Leeds Metropolitan District, while the Table 1 illustrates the ethnic and religious orientations among the Muslim communities in Leeds. On Map 1, I have used letters to show clearly the location of each mosque using its postcode. As can be seen on the map, the mosques are found in densely populated areas, except for the Iqra Centre and Baab-ul-Ilm Muslim Community of Metro.

To date, I have visited all of the mosques mentioned in the table, whether Sunni or Shi'a; however, it is not my concern to examine all of them further, nor the Shi'a ones as already mentioned. Instead, I chose four mosques, namely *Leeds Grand Mosque* (LGM), *Leeds Makkah Masjid* (LMM), *Leeds Islamic Centre* (LIC), and *Leeds Iqra Centre* (IC) in which to conduct fieldwork research. This is because together these mosques are not only palpable examples of at least some key ethnic diversity (Arab and Indo-Pakistani), but also - and especially - because they are representatives of the aforementioned reformist and traditionalist movements like the

²³ <http://www.minab.org.uk/self-regulation/standards> (Accessed on 7 June 2012). The MINAB's five standards are: 1) Members apply principles of good corporate governance. 2) Members ensure that services are provided by suitably qualified and or experienced personnel. 3) There are systems and processes in place to ensure that there are no impediments to the participation in the activities, including governance, for young people. 4) There are systems and processes in place to ensure that there are no impediments to the participation in the activities, including governance, for women. 5) Members ensure there are programmes that promote the civic responsibility of Muslims in the wider society.

Salafiyya and Muslim Brotherhood, Jamaa'ti Islami, Deobandi-Tablighi, and Sufi Barelwi, as we shall see below in more detail.

4.2. The history of the Muslim presence in Leeds:

Muslims from the Indian Subcontinent constitute the majority of the Muslim population in Leeds and this conforms to the general pattern in Britain. South Asian Muslim immigration to Britain mainly comes from the following districts in modern-day Pakistan: Mirpur, Campbellpur, Peshawar, Jhelum, Gujarat, and Rawalpindi; and Bangladesh: Sylhet (Dahya, 1974: 80; Shaw, 1988: 12-13). In Leeds, Muslims predominantly come from the Mirpur and Sylhet districts (Geaves, 1995: 2). Four stages of migration identified by Ballard and Ballard (1977: 51) with regards to Sikhs in Leeds can be applied to the South Asian Muslim settlement in Leeds. Thus the four stages of migrant settlement may be summed up as involving, firstly, individual pioneers; secondly, the larger scale migration of unskilled labour; thirdly, the reuniting of wives, children, and other family members; and finally, the development of families and of a British-born second generation. Significantly, however, Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslims were later in reuniting their families than the Sikhs due to greater religious-cultural conservatism, and this process was not complete until the 1980s.

Research by Geaves (1995) provides the early history of Muslim settlement in the city from the 1940s. He explains that pioneer migrants initially worked as peddlers, then later on set up takeaway and restaurant businesses, as well as finding unskilled job opportunities in textile mills and other factories. Their close cooperation and bringing of other kin and family members not only from the subcontinent (Geaves,

1995: 3), but also from other cities of Britain (Dahya, 1974: 80), is typical of the pattern of settlement of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis elsewhere.

According to Geaves (1995: 9), Muslim self-awareness in Leeds began with a Muslim's death in hospital, in 1953. The body stayed there for about four days, and the hospital somehow contacted another Muslim called Mozifur Rahman (originally from Bengal), owner of the Ghulistan Restaurant in Chapeltown Road, to take the body from the hospital; otherwise it was going to be cremated. Geaves also quotes Mr. Rahman's experience in finding out that there was no Muslim burial ground in the cemetery, and discovering how he could buy a plot there. After getting advice from the authorities, Mr. Rahman decided to approach other Muslims and collect money to buy the plot. Eventually he managed to buy a plot for twenty people in the cemetery. Rahman's English wife played an important intermediary role in this process.

Subsequently, Rahman tried to make contact with all Muslims in the city and collect money in order to open a community centre or mosque where they could come together. In 1953, Muslims also formed '*the Pakistan Muslim Association*' (PMA) with Mozifur Rahman as president. For several years they tried to buy a place for prayers, but in the city nobody was ready to sell Muslims any property which could be used as a mosque. Muslims started to negotiate with the Jewish community to buy their old prayer hall. The building at 21 Leopold Street was bought on 26 June 1958 in order to convert it into a Mosque.²⁴ The first mosque in the city, the Jinnah Mosque, was eventually opened in 1960 through the great efforts of pioneers of the Muslim community (Geaves, 1995: 9-11). In the first stage, we can see how ethnicity

²⁴ http://www.leedsic.com/about_us/index.html. Retrieved on 25 February, 2010.

plays a pivotal role among Muslims in the city, so that when the PMA tried to bring Muslims together, there were different opinions among Bengali Muslims (East Pakistanis) who did not wish to involve themselves with the West Pakistani Muslims.²⁵ There were also theological differences between the two groups, since the former had strong links with the 19th century reformers like Karamat Ali (d.1873) and Haji Shari'atullah (d.1840), and consequently many Bengali Muslims studied in Deobandi Dar al-Ulum centres (Ibid: 9). Geaves maintains that:

Mozifur Rahman claims that he persuaded the Bengalis to include the West Pakistanis in the interests of the Muslim unity...despite slight differences, the Bengalis agreed and the Jinnah mosque, the first in Leeds, opened in 1960. The Pakistan Muslim association ran the mosque with joint trustees from the Bengali and West Pakistani communities (1995: 9).

The early settlers started to pray in the mosque, enjoying some unity because of their small numbers despite “Bengali-Pakistani” and “reformist-traditional” (Geaves, 1995: 9-11) differences. The mosque served the Muslim community of 500-600 single men and about half a dozen families of the pioneer settlers, and remained a focal point for the Muslims in Leeds for many years. Furthermore, it was the main mosque until the opening of the Islamic Centre in Spencer Place in 1981. However, Muslims could not preserve this unity as civil war broke out between the East and the West Pakistanis in the late 1960s. The establishment of the State of Bangladesh in

²⁵ Tensions between East and West Pakistan existed from the creation of Pakistan in 1947. East and West Pakistan were separated by more than 1,000 miles. The two parts of Pakistan shared few cultural and social traditions other than Islam. However, the political and national aspirations of East Pakistan resulted in civil war in 1971, in due course leading to the establishment of Bangladesh as a new state.

1971 resulted in the creation of “the East Pakistan Association” and later on the “Bangladesh Association” (Geaves, 1995: 12), which broke away from the PMA.

Thus two typical stages of settlement can be seen in the history of Muslims. Initially, small numbers of Muslims associated together regardless of their regional, caste, or sectarian origins, thus exemplifying “fusion and cooperation”; then came fragmentation as numbers grew, and ties of village kinship and sectarian affiliation gradually became more significant as the basis of communal aggregation - “fission and fragmentation” (Lewis, 2002:56; and McLoughlin, 2005a: 540). In addition to migrant worker settlement in Leeds, a large proportion of international university students, mainly of Arab ethnicity, came to Leeds in the late 1970s and 1980s. The history of this Muslim settlement in Leeds is largely undocumented. Mr. Hamid, a local Pakistani businessman in his sixties states that:

The Arabs mainly came here to study at the university or the Leeds City College, including for post-graduate study. In the 80s and afterwards, Arabs were also applying for jobs at textile mills and other factories. Then some political asylum seekers from the Middle Eastern countries migrated into West Yorkshire, either on kin advice or for any other reasons. The process is that firstly, they came here and shared a flat or house with friends and relatives, then they got a council house, and finally settled here. Sometimes they set up their own business, such as kebab takeaways or restaurants.

(Interviewed on 17 April 2012)

Hasib from Syria gives his personal story and mentions other push factors affecting the Arab migration to Leeds:

In the late 70s and early 80s, I came here for postgraduate study, and as far as I know there were many other Arabs who after graduation, either got a job or established [their] own businesses...The Iran-Iraq War [1980-88] played a vital role in the immigration, especially from Iraq, since many migrated for political reasons and to seek asylum in this country. Later on, the occupation and civil war worsened the situation and still more Iraqi Arabs migrated here, either for political or economic reasons. (Interviewed on 11 May 2012)

Arab migration to and settlement in the city corresponds to Ballard's model in that, according to the above informants, individual Arabs came to Leeds initially as students, asylum seekers, or unskilled migrants. After securing the necessary money or accommodation, the Arabs brought their families and relatives. Today, the number of Arabs in Leeds is 3,791 according to the 2011 census.

4.3. Mosques in Leeds:

With the increase in population, the Muslim communities of Leeds needed more places for worship and for educating themselves and their children. Reproduction of institutions and networks in the context of Britain, as Joly, (1995: 7) has pointed out, "would allow them to carry on practicing religion and culture." Indeed, it is a characteristic feature of migrant Muslim communities in a non-Muslim environment that many pioneers, regardless of their educational backgrounds, have considered the necessity of establishing a *masjid* to follow the methodology of the Prophet Muhammad when he migrated to Medina. In addition to the basic traditional functions, such as the five daily prayers, Friday congregation and sermon, funerals,

religious education for adults and youth, and so on, the mosques in Britain are also increasingly places for social (marriage, meetings), cultural (lectures, talks, female pursuits), and sporting activities (McLoughlin, 2005b: 1048).²⁶

Mushrooming numbers of prayer places and community centres were clearly seen amongst the Muslim community in Leeds. In addition to the aforementioned ethnic tension between Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, ‘sectarian’ diversity began to appear amongst the Muslim community in the city. Some of the Bengali community founded another mosque named *Shah Jalal Mosque*. The Islamic Centre was opened by the PMA in 1981 and imams from the Deoband School took positions in leading prayers as well as educating children. *The Jinnah Mosque* was sold back to the Bangladeshi community, which renamed it as *Al Ameen Mosque*.

International university students and Arab Muslims living nearby Leeds University used Omar Welfare House²⁷ for social gatherings, meetings, and Friday prayers alongside the prayer room at the university. Later on, in 1994, the members of Omar House bought a church in Woodsley Road with the intention to convert it into a mosque, to be known as the Grand Mosque (Geaves, 1995: 12). In the same year, the Pakistani-Kashmiri (Mirpuri) community which uses *Bilal Mosque* in Harehills raised the money to construct the first purpose-built mosque in the city (Geaves, 1995: 13). The foundation stone of the new mosque was laid on Conway Road. Now

²⁶ See also a recent report by the Quilliam Foundation, 'Mosques Made in Britain' at http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/images/mosques_made_in_britain_quilliam_022009.pdf. The Quilliam Foundation is a counter-extremism think tank set up to address the unique challenges of citizenship, identity, and belonging in a globalised world (Accessed on May 15, 2012).

²⁷ It was a house located on Hyde Park Road, Burley, functioning as an assembly point for international university students.

it is called *Markazi Jamia Masjid Bilal*, with twin minarets and a green dome, and has capacity for 3200 people, including women.

Geaves (1995: 13) gives an estimate for the number of mosques in Leeds as between 10 and 12, and now, according to my research, the figure has reached 21. As mentioned above, the Muslim population almost doubled between 1991 and 2001, and in parallel to this increase, so also the number of mosques has risen. However, while the first prayer places used to be small houses converted into mosques, the current trend is generally for purpose-built buildings that have the capacity for accommodating thousands at the same time.

All mosques in Leeds provide five times daily and Friday congregational prayers with a qualified imam, Qur'anic circles for children and adults, other study circles (Qur'anic exegesis, *Hadith*, *Sirah* or biographical history of the Prophet and His companions), *fatwas* and consultation in family matters (marriage, divorce); and some of them also serve as a supplementary school, while only the biggest mosques have funeral facilities (washing, burial preparation). Now, after mapping the mosques of Leeds, we can focus on our four selected mosques in some detail, exploring their history, ethnicity, religious orientation, jurisprudential school, and tradition regarding Islamic belief and practices.

4.3.1. Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC):

Also known as Central Jamia Mosque, the LIC, as mentioned above, was established by the Pakistan Muslim Association (PMA) in 1981, when Muslims needed a bigger place than the Jinnah Mosque on Leopold Street (Geaves, 1995: 13). Firstly, 48 Spencer Place was bought, and then through a step-by-step process next door

buildings were added to the Islamic Centre complex²⁸ to provide more spaces for social, sporting, and educational activities. For example, during a funeral held in the Mosque, for about three days the mosque complex provided food while the kin of the deceased person accepted condolences in the mosque. The complex was eventually completed in 2001.

Similar to the LMM, the LIC is a purpose-built mosque in the Pakistani construction style, and has twin minarets and a dome (see Figure 2 below). With a capacity of 4700 people, it is the biggest mosque in Leeds. The LIC is a three-storey building which consists of three main prayer halls on each floor. The basement is generally used as a girls' supplementary school and is also occasionally used for funeral (*janaza*) prayers. The middle floor is the usual prayer area for men and ablution rooms are found on the left-hand side before the main entrance of the mosque. The top floor prayer hall is the same shape, except for a hole in the centre so that people below can see the dome just as much as people on the top floor can see the imam, especially during *jum'ah* sermons. The top floor also has rooms used for children's education as a supplementary school for boys and girls separately.

The mosque is located in the northeast side of Leeds city centre, in Chapeltown, where the early migrants settled, and very close to Leopold Street. Lower class businesses, restaurants, corner shops, boutiques, *halal* food and grocery stores, and people with diverse ethnic dress styles along the main road, Roundhay, present an image as if from Pakistan or the Middle East. The Chapeltown and Harehills areas have been places of multi-ethnic migrant communities for decades.

²⁸ See http://www.leedsic.com/about_us/index.html (Accessed on September 20, 2010).

Figure 2: A Picture of Leeds Islamic Centre



The picture retrieved from http://www.leedsic.com/_images/Mosque-Aerial-View.jpg by the permission of LIC's management office.

The LIC has two official imams, both of whom have graduated from Deobandi *dar al-ulums*, and they are referred to as *mawlana*. The congregation consists of mainly followers of the Hanafi school of law from Pakistan, along with some Afghans, Somalis, and a handful of Arabs from North Africa (Tunisia, Morocco). As Geaves (1995: 13) has claimed, the centre has been under the influence of Deobandis since its foundation, and hosts visiting scholars, *tablighis*, *mawlanas* or imams from *Dar al-Ulum* in Dewsbury. Every Thursday evening, people among the congregation go to *Dewsbury Central Jamia Masjid*, next door to the Dar al-Ulum, in order to listen to a *bay'an* or conference and attend *tashkeel* (a meeting to make a promise to go somewhere else for 3, 7, 40 days, 4 months, or 1 year to do *tabligh* to remind other Muslims what a Muslim needs to do to maintain religious identity).

For Friday congregation, the imams deliver sermons in a mixture of Arabic, Urdu, and English. The imam sits on the pulpit (*minbar*) while he speaks before calling for

prayer; and after that he stands up on the pulpit and holds a long stick while delivering his Friday sermon, a combination of Arabic praise for Allah and greetings to His prophet Muhammad, and prayer for the whole Muslim community. Although the imams deliver the first sermon slowly, the usage of two languages causes a lack of concentration from the point of non-Urdu speakers. When I asked about the stick that the imam holds during the sermon, “it is a *sunnah*, a practice of our Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)” responded the imam of LIC. This is a clearly visible difference between the Deobandi (Tablighi) and the other religious orientations in the city. The key point is that from the Deobandi point of view it is extremely important that the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad is maintained in such a practice.

The LIC provides classes for adult men, such as *tafseer* given by one of the regular imams at the weekend, and *hadith* on Friday evenings given by another expert *Mawlana Othman*, a graduate from Bury Dar al-Ulum, after *maghrib* or sunset prayer. Occasionally conferences and lectures by renowned visiting Tablighi or Deobandi scholars are given to the community. However, it seems that the LIC mostly allocates its facilities and staff for children’s education. “More than 600 children go to the supplementary school under the guidance of male and female teachers”, says one of the wardens in the mosque.

The children are given traditional religious education while sitting down, with long book-rests in front of them. The main courses include basic Arabic, to equip them to be able to read the holy Qur’an; basic Islamic beliefs and practices, such as the principles of Islamic belief (believing in Allah, the prophets, angels, books, fate, and resurrection), and the main pillars of Islam (the testimony, prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and alms giving); the history of Islam; and *tajweed* classes (reading the

Qur'an correctly and according to the rules); and learning basic *du'a* (prayers while performing namaz) and chapters from the Qur'an to be able to read within *namaz*.²⁹

4.3.2. Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM):

As noted above, the LGM was founded in 1994 by members of the Omar Welfare House Trust. It was funded by Sheikh Saif Bin Muhammad Al-Nahayyan who is from the United Arab Emirates.³⁰ The LGM is located in the western part of the city, in Woodsley Road, close to both universities and colleges. *Halal* butchers, together with international food stores owned either by Arabs or Indo-Pakistanis, are abundant in the surrounding streets. Middle-class businessmen and postgraduate university students predominate in this neighbourhood populated primarily by Arabic-speaking immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa.

The mosque is not purpose-built (see Figure 3 below) and consists of a main prayer hall; a balcony for women with glassed wall and separate entrance, overlooking the main prayer hall; another smaller balcony on the right-hand side for men which is sometimes used by women during crowded sessions and prayers; a glassed room on the left-hand side of the main prayer hall, used for study circles as well as for prayer, especially during winter when the attendance for prayers is low. The mosque has capacity for 500 male and 150-200 female Muslims, and sometimes people pray in the garden on the grass during crowded Friday and *'eid (Fitr and Adha* festive) prayers. Nonetheless, the mosque committee has an extension plan and raises funds for that, as announced routinely after Friday congregations. The mosque has also a

²⁹ This syllabus information is based on an informal interview with one of the teachers in the LIC's supplementary school. (17 November 2010)

³⁰ <http://www.leedsgrandmosque.com/mosque/history.asp> Accessed on 25 May 2011

room in the basement which is used as a gymnasium and place for the first mosque-based Muslim scout activities in Leeds.³¹

Figure 3: A picture of Leeds Grand Mosque



A considerable number of Muslims from the Malaysian and Indonesian student community also live near to the mosque. In addition, English converts and other ethnic minorities such as Turks, Kurds, and Muslims from Balkan countries attend the mosque for *jum'ah* and *'eid* prayers. Considering all this, the LGM is a unique place for an international Muslim community in Leeds. It is also important to note that female Muslims come to the mosque for daily (five times), *jum'ah* (Friday), *tarawih* (a *sunnah* prayer up to 20 *rak'ah* at night during the holy month of Ramadan), and *eid* prayers. The attendance of women for every prayer in this

³¹ http://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/latest-news/central-leeds/city_gets_its_first_muslim_scouts_1_2080714 (Accessed on 5 October 2011)

mosque is an exceptional situation when we consider the average mosque throughout Britain.³²

The dominant language used in the mosque is Arabic, but this is followed by an English translation of sermons when the imam finishes his sermon (*khutbah*). Although the *imam*, Sheikh Muhammad Taher, follows the Maliki school of law in practice, the congregation consists of Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali followers, and that is noticeable during congregational prayers. We may cite here some practical examples of these differences. During the standing up (*qiyam*) position some people clasp their hands either from elbow to elbow or with their right hand resting on their left hand wrist, and then put them in different places such as on the chest or just above the navel; some raise their hands before proceeding to the act of prostration (*sajdah*), while some others do not. In terms of expressing their ethnic diversity, people come to the mosque in all types of ethnic dress, ranging from the *thawb* or traditional Arab customary wear to Asian styles, and to blue jeans, suits, and so on.

The *khutbah* or sermon is delivered in very formal Arabic, and consists of two sections. In the first, the imam generally touches upon belief matters, such as the main pillars of Islam and the requirements of living as a Muslim in this day and age, using examples from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*; and then he addresses current issues including injustices towards Muslims in some parts of the world, like Palestine, and more recently a number of *khutbah* have been condemning the dictatorships in North Africa and the Middle East. With this feature, addressing the global Muslim community (*ummah*) very frequently, the mosque is distinguishable from the other

³² See the aforementioned Quilliam Foundation report 'Mosques Made in Britain'.

mosques. The second section focuses on the need sometimes to complete the topic delivered in the previous section, or gives a brief lecture on a religious practice which might be misunderstood or mistakenly implemented, and the sermon then finishes with a supplication.

People come from far afield (e.g. Harrogate and Bradford) to listen to the imam, Muhammad, renowned for his voice and recitation of the holy Qur'an. Occasionally, Abdullah al-Judai (originally from Iraq), a famous sheikh among Muslims in Leeds and member of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) and Dr. Hasan al-Katib (originally from Iraq), chairman of Leeds Muslim Forum and active in inter-faith dialogue in the city, deliver sermons in the same format, though al-Katib provides his own translation.

The mosque has a number of activities including Qur'anic circles for children, both male and female; *sirah* or biography of the Prophet Muhammad in English for females and the youth; *tafseer* or Qur'anic exegesis in Arabic by Sheikh al-Judai; *tajweed* classes (reading the Qur'an correctly and fluently) given by Sheikh Taher, and other activities such as conferences, interfaith dialogue, and Islamic exhibitions for local schools. It also provides *fatawa* (plural of *fatwa*) or legal reasoning, and advice; *janazah* or funeral; and *nikah* or marriage services for the Muslim community.³³

4.3.3. Leeds Iqra Centre (IC):

The IC was founded in 2001 as a local branch of the United Kingdom Islamic Mission (UKIM established in 1962) which is a counterpart of Jama'at-i Islami in the

³³ See more on <http://leedsgrandmosque.com/>

UK (see Chapter 2).³⁴ It is not a purpose-built mosque, rather it is a modern house with two floors (see Figure 4 below). The basement has a bookshop, a library with study room, washing (*wudu*) area, and a prayer hall for women (50-100) with separate entrance; the top floor is the main prayer hall with the capacity for 150-200 people.

Figure 4: A picture of Leeds Iqra Centre



The IC is located in middle-class Moortown, LS17, to the northeast of Leeds city centre, and far from the heavily populated Muslim locations as shown on Map 1. However, the IC is the only Sunni mosque in that area and the centre is not big enough for the Sunni Muslim population. Hence, the mosque committee and local Muslim community are raising funds to construct another mosque in the area. “We are planning to build up a bigger education centre and prayer hall close to here [the current centre]” says a semi-retired volunteer, Haji Sadiq (interviewed on 15 March 2011).

³⁴ <http://www.ukim.org/ukim/> (Accessed on 04 May 2010)

The attendees are predominantly Pakistani Muslims, and some international Arab students come to *jum'ah* and *'eid* prayers. Middle class businessmen and highly educated Muslims (doctors, engineers, accountants, teachers), as a hallmark of the reformist Jama'ati Islami membership profile, were among the attendees when I talked with some of them during my visits in 2010 and 2011.

The congregation are mainly followers of the Hanafi school of law, as in the LMM and the LIC, but forty per cent of my interviewees here have responded, as I shall discuss in Chapter 7, that they are following only the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet, not any particular school of law. The imam of IC is Ershad, who has gained his religious education in Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE, see McLoughlin, 2005c: 64), Leicester, and holds an MA degree in Islamic Studies from Birmingham University. The mosque is unique among Sunni mosques in Leeds, in terms of using *only* the English language in sermons and any other activities. It shows how UKIM gives importance to integration to British society as well as educating and accessing to Muslim youth. The imam delivers Friday sermons in English on current topics and issues in daily life, advising on how to preserve religious identity while living in a non-Muslim environment, and on how to represent Islam well and positively to the wider community.

The IC offers a number of social and religious activities such as Qur'anic circles for children and adults, study circles for females, including the history of the Prophet's life (*sirah*), basic Arabic, *tajweed*, and Urdu for beginners, and other women's activities such as 'Moortown Community Fair' as an interfaith activity. It also provides an online *fatwa* service and discussion forums open to registered

members.³⁵ Similar to the other mosques mentioned above, a supplementary school is one of the main functions of the centre, and provides maths and science classes for children, in addition to religious education. A highly urbanised middle class Muslim population benefits from the mosque facilities not only for religious education but also in the form of auxiliary programmes for the formal school curriculum.

The characteristic feature of UKIM can be seen in any of its branches throughout Britain. The motto “to convey the true spirit of Islam to the Western world”³⁶ is always emphasized and the main purpose for all UKIM centres throughout Britain is summed up as follows:

- a) The propagation and projection of the true Islamic teachings implicitly identifying and exposing concepts and innovatory practices that are alien to the message of Islam.
- b) Demonstrating to the nation's opinion-formers, academics, industrialists, financiers, etc that Islam is a timeless and relevant problem-solving way of life.
- c) Providing a valued Islamic education to Muslim children living in the UK.³⁷

4.3.4. Leeds Makkah Masjid (LMM):

The LMM is the third largest mosque in Leeds. Purpose-built, it has three minarets and a green dome in the Pakistani architectural style (see Figure 5 below). The idea for construction of the mosque goes back to the late 1990s. The previous “small Barelwi-oriented mosque, Al-Madina Jamia Masjid, serving the local Mirpuri community” (Geaves, 1995: 16) since the 1970s, was not big enough to cater for

³⁵ <http://www.iqracentre.org.uk> (Accessed on 27 February 2010)

³⁶ <http://www.iqracentre.org.uk/default.asp?ID=3> (Accessed on 22 March 2010)

³⁷ Ibid.

Muslims as the local population had increased dramatically.³⁸ Leeds Muslim Council (the management committee of al-Madina Jamia Masjid) finally decided to buy a place in the area to build a purpose-built mosque. There was only one property on sale which was thought to be suitable for the construction of a mosque. It was a church that had been abandoned for many years. However, it was a unique church with a wooden structure and was a registered listed building, so the plan to buy this church, demolish it and build a new worship place for Muslims came under challenge. After a long negotiation with the local authorities and MPs, Muslims managed to buy the place and started constructing the mosque in 2000. About three years later, the project was completed at a total cost of £1.8 million, and the mosque in Thornville Road was opened as the *Makkah Masjid*.³⁹

Figure 5: A picture of Leeds Makkah Masjid



³⁸ Al-Madina Masjid still serves the Muslim community in the Hyde Park area, LS6, but it is generally used as a supplementary school for children and as a Qur'an school.

³⁹ For more information see <http://www.makkahmasjid.co.uk/wp/index.php/makkah-masjid/building-leeds-makkah-masjid/> (Accessed on 21 December 2010)

The LMM has capacity to cater for 2700 people. It has three floors: basement (kitchen, dining area, and ladies' hall with separate entrance), the second floor (main prayer hall, ablution facilities), and the top floor (including a supplementary prayer hall which is used for special days and rituals, and rooms for computers and a library). The dome of the mosque is ornamented with calligraphy of Qur'anic verses and frescoes in the Pakistani style which constitute an immediately attractive feature. In view of its overall presentation and facilities, the LMM has won awards⁴⁰ from several organisations and it is pointed to as a model for prospective mosque constructions in future.

The LMM is located in the Hyde Park area, LS6, close to both universities and the city centre, like the LGM. The neighbourhood is populated primarily by those speaking Panjabi, Pothwari and, among the more educated, the Urdu religious lingua franca from the Indian subcontinent. *Halal* supermarkets and takeaway shops in the surrounding streets are common. People of Pakistani ethnic origin, mainly from Mirpur district, predominantly constitute the mosque's congregation, though some other ethnicities and especially university students, such as Indonesians, Turks, and Africans, along with Muslim converts, also come to *jum'ah* and *'eid* prayers. They are only a handful in number and not comparable with the number in the LGM.

The LMM has a regular imam, *Qari Asim*, who is a solicitor and succeeds his late father, Hafiz Fateh Muhammad, and his role in the community. The deputy imam, *Qari Qasim*, is the younger brother of *Qari Asim* and is a Qur'an teacher at *al-Madina Masjid* in Brudenell Grove. Both imams are *hafiz* (i.e., they have memorised

⁴⁰ The Brick Development Association, Best craftsmanship award for 2003, and Public building runners-up, see <http://www.makkahmasjid.co.uk/wp/index.php/makkah-masjid/building-leeds-makkah-masjid> (Accessed on 23 December 2010)

the whole Qur'an by heart) and they deliver sermons on *jum'ah* and *'eid* prayers in a mixture of Arabic, Urdu, and English. The mosque congregation and imams describe themselves as "*Sufi and Barelwi*", or "*ahle sunnah wa'l jamaah*" (Sanyal, 1996: 68; and Geaves, 2000: 75), which latter expression literally means the group of people who follow the ways of the Prophet Muhammad. The congregation follow the Hanafi school of thought in Islamic jurisprudence, and the prayers are performed by nearly everyone according to this *madhab*.

Like in the LGM, the *khutbah* includes general advice aimed to strengthen faith and the practice of religion accordingly. In addition to the examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad and His Companions, the prominent Sufi orders' life and suggestions are sometimes pointed out according to the content. Unlike in the case of the LGM, the congregation individually pray more *sunnah* or *nafil namaz* (not compulsory) up to ten *rak'ah* (a series of ritual movements which form a part of the *namaz*) after the main prayer *fard* (obligatory), and the imam makes a small *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah and His messenger) followed by a supplication immediately after finishing the *fard namaz*. Furthermore, while people go out after the whole of the *namaz* has finished, about five or more notable people assemble next to the imam and recite *durud sharif*, *salat o salam* or some poems by Sufi sheikhs, especially those by Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi (d.1921) to ask intercession of the Prophet, which is, as Geaves (1996:106) has observed, the "Barelwi customary *na't* in praise of the Prophet."

In a similar vein to the LGM, the LMM has a number of activities for a range of groups from children to adults, including females. Children's classes are generally held in Al-Madina Masjid in Brudenell Grove, and the weekend classes for the youth

including both genders take place at Woodsley Multicultural Community Centre, in Woodsley Road. *Tajweed* and *tafseer* classes are generally given after the month of Ramadan by both imams. A number of lecture series are provided by the mosque to the community.⁴¹ These include such things as basic *fiqh* (jurisprudence), Sufism, morals and banner in Islam, spirituality, and so on; conferences, Islamic exhibitions especially during inter-faith week, and some gatherings (*majlis* or procession) for *milad un nabi* (the birthday of the prophet) and *urs* (death anniversary) of Sufi figures and prominent religious leaders.

4.4. Discourses on religious diversity among Sunni Muslims in Leeds:

The definitive works of Lewis (1993), Geaves (1996), Birt (2011), and Hamid (2011) about ‘sectarian’ aspects of South Asian Muslim communities in Britain are primarily helpful in terms of understanding the religious tensions between Muslim communities. As discussed in Chapter 2, there is a schism between the reformist Deobandi-Tablighis, Islamist Jama’ati Islami, and Sufi-oriented traditionalist Barelwi groups. My concern here, in this section, is to illustrate the picture of religious diversity among the Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds, and to discuss some of the common discourses amongst them.

Initially, when I visited the mosques in Leeds, there was no clear difference between them. Having knowledge about Islamic theology, all the differences seem to me normal and familiar. For instance, following one of the four schools of law, and

⁴¹ See for more information at <http://www.makkahmasjid.co.uk/> (Accessed on 11 December 2010).

performing *salat* or *namaz* (prayer) slightly differently according to these schools, is well established throughout the history of Islamic Law and is well-known among the Muslim community. The overwhelming majority of my interviewees have responded that they have great respect for other jurisprudential schools whilst themselves following just one of them. In fact this diversity can be seen throughout the whole Muslim world as well as throughout the UK. In the past Muslims had the chance to see different nations in the same place mainly during the pilgrimage time or through trade; nowadays Muslims are everywhere especially in Diaspora, and can witness diversity in terms of practicing their religion. This is one of the advantages (and disadvantages) of being in the Muslim Diaspora. Thus, the representation of the Muslim community in the UK is in some ways a miniature of the whole Muslim community of the world.

Being Hanafi, *Shafii*, Maliki, and Hanbali is seen as a sign of flexibility and richness within Islam, given that ethno-cultural, geographic, and educational differences are influential in picking and choosing a *madhab* (Abu Zahra, 2003). Additionally, human nature with its different capacities in perception, reason, evaluation, and implementation is another factor in that. It is useful to quote the views of some of my informants about this diversity within the Sunni Muslim community. Thirty-three-year-old *Qari Asim*, the imam of LMM, who is of Pakistani origin, states:

Diversity in fiqh matters is good and well established, you know, so certain people can follow certain ways and most of the diversity arises because of the cultural issues. For example, a family member can become Maliki, the rest are Hanafi, and usually there are some diversity issues. But, at the end of the day, whoever follows whichever fiqh he should completely act upon

it. Regarding belief diversity, Sunni-Shi'a, we would rather not have it, but they are so well established in the history, so it is hard to solve historical problems... (interviewed on March 27, 2011).

The current imam of LGM, Sheikh Muhammad (a 42-year-old) states in a similar vein:

We have schools of thought in law, any kind of law, man-made or divine law, how people understand the verses, the passages from the holy book and practice of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), is an outcome of human thinking and reflecting the rules of Islam, the teaching of Islam. If you said, there is only one saying in Islam, one rule in Islam and every single Muslim must practice the same, this would cause lots of problems. Because Islam came to different countries, different nations, and people are different in their way of thinking, they are different in the way they see things, so this is a natural way of thinking about dealing with the verses from the Qur'an and the Sunnah. ...the most important thing is to benefit from all of them, not to be extreme in sticking to one of them. (Interviewed on May 31, 2011)

In addition, the imam of the IC centre, Ershad (42 years old) points out that diversity in juristic issues is a *rahmah* (mercy), as the Prophet declared. However, he maintains: "Sadly, now because the conditions of Muslims are stagnant, far from the true message, people have made it a religion of conflict and a deviant one, which should not be the case" (interviewed on April 22, 2011).

To sum up, diversity in *fiqh* or jurisprudence is seen by the overwhelming majority of my research participants as natural and as a form of flexibility for the benefit of

the whole Muslim community, which consists of various ethno-cultural elements and religious orientations. From my personal observation, I can say that having such diversity in Britain or any other European country enables Muslims to know each other better, and to understand the religion more with its universal aspects depending on time and place. However, there are some other differences and some more controversial issues that I have noticed during my research, and it is these that I am now going to sketch.

4.4.1. Different implementations of agreed religious practices:

The most visible difference among the Muslim community in Leeds is in the area of allocating the time for daily and Friday prayers, the start and end dates of Ramadan, religious feasts such as *eid al-fitr* (at the end of the holy month *Ramadan* in the Islamic calendar) and *eid al-adha* (held in the pilgrimage month, on the tenth day of *Dhul-Hijjah*). For daily and Friday prayers, each mosque has its own timetable according to the mainstream jurisprudential sect and calculation method,⁴² and these differ slightly from each other. However, where feast days are concerned, it is a big dilemma for the Muslim community. For example, I have observed two different days for *eid al-adha* in November 2010, and although at a glance the difference simply comes from their calculation method, nonetheless there are some other reasons for that which I will deal with in more detail in Chapter 5.

⁴² For instance, traditionally, Hanafis differ from the other three schools about the time of *asr* (late afternoon) prayer that begins when the length of any object's shadow is twice the length of the object plus the length of that object's shadow at noon, while the others agree that *asr* time begins when the length of any object's shadow is equal to itself plus the length of that object's shadow at noon. See <http://praytimes.org/calculation> and <http://www.islamicfinder.org> for more information on general calculation methods and institutions used by Muslims in Europe and America.

Among the selected mosques, there are noticeable differences in some religious practices. For instance, during Ramadan, Muslims prayed *tarawih namaz* of about 20 *rak'ah* in the LMM, the LIC, and the IC. However, in the LGM, Muslims did 8 *rak'ah*. This prayer is not compulsory as communal prayer, or not obligatory upon the person individually. Rather, it is a *sunnah* prayer in which the Prophet Muhammad prayed sometimes 8 *rak'ah*, and sometimes 20 *rak'ah*. The diversity stems from the application of the Prophet. Thereby, the communities practice that differently according to their *madhab*, whether Hanafi or Shafi'i. However, this different practice is not a major issue according to my informants, given that both figures were practiced by the Prophet Muhammad, and the prayer itself is not *fard* (obligatory).

Another issue for religious practices is that of *jam'* or amalgamation of two daily prayers, that is to say noon (*duhr*) and late afternoon (*'asr*) prayers in the winter season; and sunset (*maghrib*) and late evening (*ish'a*) in summer. This implementation is generally made in the LGM by Arabs. It is well established by the Shafi'i school of thought, and commonly used by its followers as well as by Malikis and Hanbalis; in the Hanafi school of thought it is only used twice a year during the pilgrimage due to the task of performing hajj duty and lack of time.

The reason behind this implementation in Islamic jurisprudence is to make things easier for Muslims, if there are bad weather conditions, such as strong wind, rain, snow, flood, etc, and time constraints in carrying out a religious duty or travel. As I shall discuss this practice in more detail in the context of Britain (see Chapter 6), I am content here simply to provide a very brief account about it. These are the main visibly different implementations among Sunni mosques as far as religious practices

are concerned. Such differences are commonly known and acceptable among the Sunni Muslim communities, whereas differences in belief lead to more genuine division within the communities.

4.4.2. Differences in belief matters:

Muslims from the Indian subcontinent brought their established debates with them to the UK. It can be seen from the history of Muslims in Leeds that as well as for reasons of ethnic hostility, traditional Barelwis (who happen also to be mainly Pakistanis) and reform-minded Deobandi/Tablighis (who also happen to be Bangladeshis) were reluctant to come together in Jinnah Mosque, even for prayers, and then each group started building up their own mosques. The most noticeable difference in beliefs among Muslims is the Barelwi-Deobandi conflict. There are still ongoing debates between the Barelwis and Deobandis, with the result that each group has its own arguments and justification for its belief and practices. The main discussion revolves around the perception of Prophet Muhammad, in matters such as celebration of his birthday, or his attributes as mentioned in the Qur'an (see Metcalf, 1982: 301; Robinson, 1988: 9). On the one hand, the Barelwis identify themselves as true representatives of Sunni Islam in the UK. This allows them to counter the reform groups' central criticism that their Islam is impure and full of innovations and cultural accretions, on the other. They also accuse the reform groups of being Wahhabis. The *'ulama'* of Bareilly dar al'Ulum in general have issued *fatwas* that declare that Wahhabism is outside the fold of Islam (see Geaves, 1996: 103-4).

When I was visiting the mosques in Leeds, I came across people vigorously talking about the opposing group's religious understanding and rituals. For example, in the

LIC, a medical doctor associated with Deobandi-Tabligh-i Jama'at said to me, "Be careful with Ahmads from the Indian subcontinent: Sayyid Ahmed Khan, Ghulam Ahmed, and Ahmed Reza Barelwi", highlighting the last one. For the doctor, the followers of Ahmed Barelwi created a number of *bid'ah* or innovations in Islamic belief and practices such as visiting graves and asking help from *awliya*, or saints who are dead. Thus, they are committing *shirk* (associating Allah with *awliya* or saints) according to the doctor. In similar vein, another attendee (a graduate from the Dewsbury *dar al-'ulum*) of the LIC claims that "Barelwis have a belief that the Prophet Muhammad is *hazir* [present], *nazir* [observant], *alimu'l ghayb* [has knowledge of unknown], and is *khayr al-beshar* [the best of humanity]." The debates in 19th century India (Metcalf, 1982: 301) transferred to Britain are still alive among the South Asian Muslim communities. In this section, I propose to discuss the main divergence between the Deobandis and Barelwis, based on my observation and research in Leeds.

Firstly, *milad un-Nabi* - also known as *mawlid*, the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad on the 12th of *Rabi'ul-Awwal* in the Islamic calendar - has been celebrated by many Muslims for hundreds of years. There are many poems written about the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, and known as *mawlid-i sharif* or sacred birth in the Islamic literature. From my observation in the LMM, I have witnessed a gathering similar to the programmes held in Turkey⁴³ for celebrating the birthday of

⁴³ Süleyman Çelebi's *mawlid-i sharif*, written in the 15th century, is still recited in the mosques throughout Turkey not only for the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, but also for some special occasions such as a wedding, circumcision and after the funeral while offering condolences. Each year since 1989, the middle of April has been dedicated as "happy birthday week" (Kutlu Doğum Haftası) by the Presidency of Turkish Religious Affairs and celebrated throughout Turkey, the Balkans, and wherever the Turkish communities live in the West. see <http://diyanet.gov.tr>

Prophet Muhammad. The top floor in the LMM was beautifully decorated with nice lights and big posters, and suitably dressed with perfumes. People entered the mosque one by one, and the imam of the mosque opened the programme by emphasising the importance of the celebration. Famous speakers and a *qari* (who recites poems or narrates examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad) from Pakistan were the guests for the programme. The programme began with reciting a passage from the holy Qur'an, and the guests took to the stage in turn. During the recitations, people donated money to the speakers, either dropping it in front of them or giving it to the imam after shaking his hand.

The programme ended with an invocation with *salawat* (or *darood*, greetings to the Prophet Muhammad) performed by an elderly scholar. After the programme, the attendees were invited to a festive dinner in the basement; traditional Pakistani food was served for the attendees. This is the general picture from my observation, and the imam of LMM, Qari Asim (a 33-year-old), explains the claims of other religious groups, [such as *Deobandis* (Metcalf, 1989: 310) and *Wahhabis*] about the Barelwis:

All these issues revolve around the personality of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). Of course, Barelwis do not say the Prophet is equal to Allah who is *khaliq* [creator] and the messenger is *makhluq* [creation], but he is not like other creations. He is like a jewel, for although a jewel is stone we still do not call it stone, since it is a jewel. That is the difference.

It can be understood from the quotation that there is great love for the Prophet, not *shirk*, (to attribute a partner to Allah); otherwise they would become *mushrik* (someone who attributes a partner to Allah), thus turning their backs on the Islamic

religion. In Islamic belief, if someone says, “I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, and again I bear witness that Muhammad is His messenger and slave” nobody can say *kafir* (infidel) or *mushrik* about that person as he declares himself as a Muslim. If somebody says differently to this, he or she puts his/her belief in danger according to classical Islamic theology (*kalam*) sources.⁴⁴

Having described the major conflicts between Barelwis and Deobandis, it is worthwhile here to relate my experience of witnessing a sort of ‘unity’ between these two groups in a religious ritual. Once I was in the Islamic Centre, at a noon prayer, and there was an announcement that a young person had passed away and his *janaza namaz* or funeral prayer was going to be held in *Masjid-e Bilal*, a Barelwi mosque in Harehills. The imam of LIC encouraged the congregation to attend the funeral, so I attended too. It was surprising to me that a Deobandi congregation went to a Barelwi mosque for a prayer far removed from all religious tensions. While we were going to the cemetery, the driver informed us that Muslims from the Bangladeshi Community attended the funeral, too. They prayed together, made supplication together for the dead person to be forgiven by Allah, and went to the cemetery together. Although the funeral lasted several hours, the congregation from the Islamic Centre was there for that period. This religious ritual proves, in fact, that there are not too many differences between these two groups. Conversely, there are many commonalities between them, such as coming from the same ethnic background and culture, following the same school of thought, speaking the same language, living under the same circumstances, and so on. The incident is important in terms of contextualising

⁴⁴ This is a conclusion based on the famous sayings of the Prophet, see *al-fiqh al-akbar* by Imam Abu Hanifa; *Aqidatu't-Tahawiyya* by Abu Ja'far at-Tahawi; *Kitabu't-Tawhid* by Imam Maturidi; *Maqalatu'l-Islamiyyin* by Imam Ash'ari; *Sarh'ul-Aqaid* by at-Taftazani, and so on.

different religious elements of the Muslim community in Leeds. To an extent, similar unities in the public sphere as well as in religious beliefs and practices could prove beneficial, not only “acting according to what Islamic faith requires” but also “representing Islam or *tamsil* to the wider society” (Ramadan, 1999: 146-7).

However, according to an ordinary Muslim among the LGM’s congregation, 27-year-old Hamid who describes himself as early Salafi or Ahl-e Hadith, both the Deobandis including Tablighis and Barelwis are *ahl-i bid’ah*. For the former group, he claims, “they invent things about *awliya* or Sufism, and the founder of Tablighi Jama’at, Muhammad Ilyas, had a dream and acted upon it by organising people around him.” He maintains, with regard to the Barelwis, that “they openly go to Shrines and ask help from dead people, and they are like the mushriks [pagans] of Mecca.” Thus, according to the informant, these groups invent *bid’ah* in religion and violate the creed of Muslims (interviewed on February 3, 2011). I also heard some Arab students saying that the reason for them not going to the LMM for prayer was simply that [the Barelwis] are *mushrik*. By contrast, I have witnessed the Barelwis describing the LGM as a Wahhabi mosque established in the city to foster its creed amongst the Muslim communities.

4.5. Conclusion:

This chapter has presented some insights into the religious life of Muslims in Leeds, where the number of Muslims is increasing day by day. I have attempted to show the multi-ethnic and religious diversity of Muslims in Leeds, a smaller scale of Britain’s overall Muslim picture, by mapping the most visible site for religious beliefs and practices, namely the mosque. I can conclude that the mosques in Leeds, from the

early, pioneering establishments until today, have been used for various functions such as religious, educational, social, sporting, and cultural activities. In all these aspects, the mosques are very similar to the description of the first mosque established in *Madina, Masjid-i Nabawi*, when the Prophet Muhammad migrated from *Makkah*. Thus, the mosques are found to be the central point and focus for Muslims who live in non-Muslim countries.

Having studied four different mosques in terms of their ethnic and religious orientation in this chapter, I have tried to show the pluralism among the Muslim community that exists in terms of belief and practices at a local scale. In fact, having a multi-ethnic Muslim population with different religious orientations in the same locality is an opportunity for Muslims to know each other better and to be aware of other religious beliefs and practices among the whole Muslim community. This is one of the biggest advantages of living as Muslims in a non-Muslim country, and it teaches Muslims to learn about the flexibility of Islam and also its universality. At the same time, however, the absence of religious authority has had a crucial role and importance in bringing about the further fragmentation of Muslim communities in small localities, either in religious practices or in the representation of Islam in a non-Muslim environment.

Chapter 5

Muslim relations with other Muslims and the wider society

In the previous chapter, we have seen from examples of the ethnic and religious diversity among Sunni Muslims in Leeds that being in a non-Muslim country like Britain enables Muslims to see ethnic, cultural, and religious components of Islam in the same place. These elements of Islam are barely visible in a Muslim country. Muslims have been used to seeing ethnic and religious diversity during the *hajj* (pilgrimage) season for a short term. Trade links and educational establishments have provided other exceptions (Eickelman and Piscatori, 1990:5) to this generalisation, too. However, I can argue that Muslims in Europe – numbering over twenty million (Nielsen, 2004:161) - have seen this diversity more routinely in the Muslim Diaspora. In Britain, the 2,706,066 Muslims (according to the 2011 census⁴⁵) constitute a large portion of this total figure.

Ethnic and religious diversity amongst Muslim communities can lead to ‘exclusivism’, so that some Muslims may criticise other Muslims from different backgrounds, claiming that they show a type of deviancy from the true path. It is no exaggeration to say that this is the general character of Muslims living in Western countries. In an effort to counter such attitudes, contemporary reformist Tariq

⁴⁵ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/publications/re-reference-tables.html?edition=tcm%3A77-286262> (Accessed on 13 December 2012)

Ramadan emphasises that one of the priorities for Muslims living in Europe is ‘intra-community dialogue’. He maintains that:

We must not be naive: the intentions of all the actors on the European scene are not always pure and innocent. Some are prompted by love of power and prestige, others are commissioned and controlled by foreign, if not sometimes national, governments to direct and master the process of organisations and the implantation of different Muslim communities...(1999: 219-20).

While some of these forces are beyond the scope of this study, in this chapter I will explore the role of religious issues as an obstacle to good relations between Muslims, especially in relation to efforts to set up intra-faith dialogue between Muslims on matters of religious belief and practice.

This chapter investigates the intra-faith dialogue of Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds. I begin by discussing the background to the problem, and then try to illustrate a local example to intra-Muslim relations for unity. To do so, I will examine the celebration of *‘eid al-adha* (Festival of the Sacrifice) as a case study, and will illustrate the divergence between Sunni Muslim communities in celebrating this *‘eid*, which in 2010 began in Leeds on two different days. In the light of my fieldwork research, I will continue with my approach of reflecting the opinions of both ordinary Muslims and religious experts from the selected mosques. I will demonstrate the handicaps faced by Muslims at the personal level and community organisational level when pursuing intra-faith dialogue. I will also describe what kinds of attempts are being made in order to achieve unity in such religious beliefs and practices. The

chapter concludes with a reflection on the Leeds Muslim Forum, which was established in 2001 as a vehicle for Muslim communities in Leeds to co-operate in communicating with the wider society. I argue that although the diversity of conventional religious practices (e.g. being Hanafi or Shafi'i) is seen as normal among Sunni Muslim communities as shown in the previous chapter, nevertheless unity in faith matters is almost impossible and is only achieved temporarily in exceptional situations, as we shall see in the establishment of LMF later on in this chapter.

5.1. Intra-Muslim interactions in Britain:

A variety of social, ethnic and religious values and approaches means that Muslims can never be a homogeneous faith community in Britain. Customary and culturally mixed religious practices and beliefs, the power of ethnicity over religion, misconceptions and prejudices, all play a crucial role in this. Typically, in the early stages of settlement, Muslims of different backgrounds engaged in a temporary fusion of perspectives out of necessity, for example in terms of sharing the same mosque space. However, when communities grow, and material self-interest and competition for scarce resources are at stake, the common bonds of Islam are often trumped by other bonds, as can be seen in the conflict between Somalis and Bangladeshis in Tower Hamlets in East London (Ansari, 2004: 3-4). As far as ethnic interest is concerned, a similar tendency can be seen in divisions between Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in Leeds (see Chapter 4).

Muslim identity represented in Britain or elsewhere does not necessarily mean 'Islam' itself, for this is rather an understanding and expression that varies from one

culture, social group and individual to another. Anthony Cohen's comparison between symbols and grammar makes sense in this context. According to him,

Learning words, acquiring the components of language, gives you the capacity to communicate with other people, but does not tell you *what* to communicate. Similarly with symbols: they do not tell us *what* to mean, but give us the capacity to make meaning. ...But it must again be emphasized that the sharing of symbols is not necessarily the same as the sharing of meaning. People's experience and understanding of their community thus resides in their orientation to its symbolism (Cohen, 2001: 16).

Likewise, being members of a universal Muslim community (*ummah*) also exhibits "important aspects of self-awareness and understanding" (Geaves, 1996: 54) in religious identity. Thus, the representation of Islam in Britain at both local and national level is, in reality, quite far from the universal norms of the "ideal *ummah*" (see *ibid*, p.10). The name of the symbol (Islam) is being shared, but the meanings attached are diverse.

Until reaching the third phase in Roger and Catherine Ballard's migration model (1977: 51), Muslim communities generally shared Islamic symbols such as *masjid*, *salat*, *jum'ah* congregation, *sawm* (fasting during the Ramadan), regardless of ethnic and linguistic differences. The main purpose was to preserve religious identity, by sharing the very fundamentals of religion with other Muslims regardless of differences. However, in the third phase, the arrival of families and children witnessed both a growth in numbers and a shift in "self-perception from being sojourners to settlers" (Lewis, 1994: 56) which increased the tendency to reproduce

“ethnic” and “sectarian” (Lewis, 1994: 56; Geaves, 1996: 160) fragmentations that already existed in the homeland. In Chapter 4, we have witnessed this feature in the settlement of Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds:

The Muslim communities in Britain are still very localised. They are formed along local as well as national lines. They are often structured around a handful of families who have all migrated from the same small group of neighbouring villages. It is kinfolk, the village and the biradari network which command their attention...The above characteristics of the Muslim population in Britain have resulted in the presence and proliferation of a diverse range of ethnic concerns. These have kept the communities relatively closed since the migrants do not have to go outside their boundaries to satisfy everyday needs (Geaves, 1996: 72).

Of course, Mirpuris, Bengalis or others are a small element of the universal Muslim community (*ummah*). However, even in a broader frame, the *ummah* can still be seen as comprising many discrete and particular local communities which share the symbols of Islam and identify themselves as Muslims in different ways. The influence of Western colonialism on the Muslim lands since the seventeenth century, with its consequent by-products such as nationalism and secularism, has also divided the whole Muslim community into nation-states (Donohue and Esposito, 2007: 3-4), all of which reduced the impact and meaning of the *ummah* concept in Muslim society.

As regards intra-Muslim interactions, there are undoubtedly a number of verses from the Qur'an and examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad that refer to the natural differences among Muslims.

O humankind! Surely We have created you from a single (pair of) male and female, and made you into tribes and families so that you may know one another (and so build mutuality and co-operative relationships, not so that you may take pride in your differences of race or social rank, and breed enmities). Surely the noblest, most honourable of you in God's sight is the one best in piety, righteousness, and reverence for God (The Qur'an, 49: 13).⁴⁶

There are also some sayings of the Prophet Muhammad about equality within the Muslim community. For example, it is reported that in his farewell pilgrimage the Prophet said: "*there is no superiority of an Arab to an A'jem (non-Arab), nor an A'jem to an Arab. The superiority is only in taqwa (piety) in the sight of Allah.*" In spite of these clear religious injunctions from the Qur'an and Sunnah, there is still a tendency amongst some Muslims, and of course human beings more generally, to use differences in religion to exclude others, for example, from the so-called 'own true path'.

In Britain, the conflict amongst Sunni Muslim communities revolves mainly around anti-Sufis and Sufis, reformist thought and the Sufi way of life. The former always criticises the latter for innovating (*bid'ah*) religious rituals. Geaves states:

⁴⁶ In this study, as a reference, I cite verses from one of the more recent translations of the Qur'an: *The Quran with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English*, trans. by Ali Unal (New Jersey: The Light, 2007).

Essentially, organisations that are critical of Sufism fall into two categories: those opposed to Sufism in any form such as the Wahhabi and Salafi movements, and those opposed to popular Sufism as represented in shrine worship such as *Tabligh-i Jamaat* and the Deobandis ...and some other reformed Sufi tariqas (some Naqshbandis and Tijaniyya) (2000: 53).

The discussions and controversies between the Sunni Muslim communities revolve mainly around the labels of ‘Wahhabi’ and ‘Sufi’, though the terms used for each other are a misnomer. For example, as Geaves (2000: 54) has noted in terms of the former, “the variety of organisations so labelled may have little contact with each other and cannot be described as ‘Wahhabi’ in the strict use of the term.” Thus, the “so-called Wahhabi” term may include the movements that range from the Deobandis (who emerged in nineteenth-century India with an agenda to preserve Islam via correct religious education) and its offshoot preaching group *Tabligh-i Jama‘at* (Metcalf, 1982), to political and ideological movements such as *Jama‘ati Islami* (Nasr, 1979) and *Hizbut Tahrir* (Taji-Farouki, 1996). And more recently a new revival of the movement known as *Salafiyya* (Meijer, 2009), which was originally based on the teachings of Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida, “has emerged with a particularly virulent anti-Sufi rhetoric which has reopened the historic conflicts between the Barelwis and the Deobandis imported from the Indian subcontinent” (Geaves, 2000: 53-4).

Based on my personal experience (of being here in the UK about five years) and based on fieldwork research carried out from 2010, I have barely come across fellow Muslims who say that “besides us, other Muslims are practicing true Islam.” Instead, what they claim is based on simplistic labels such as ‘innovators’, ‘imitators’,

‘Wahhabi’, ‘Deobandi’, ‘Barelvi’, ‘Salafi’, ‘secularist’, and so on. The reality is that many Muslims routinely define themselves in relation to ‘other Muslims’ who are presumed to be in error. Furthermore, the usage of “*takfir* language” to claim that other Muslims, who disagree with them, are in fact infidels, is the extreme form of such discourse. Yasir Suleiman, professor in the Centre of Islamic Studies, Cambridge, has carried out a project called *Contextualising Islam in Britain: exploratory perspectives*.⁴⁷ The report emphasises the importance of getting away from this (*takfir*) language, and of being aware of religious pluralism within the Muslim community. The report further states:

The political context for the “them and us” language is that many Muslims feel disempowered and experience a lack of confidence in their Muslim identity. It is important to have an internal mechanism that provides this confidence. There are two aspects to this. Internally, it is a question of accepting one’s own difference, working out a way to understand and be proud of oneself, without sealing oneself off from the rest of society. Externally, it means that Muslims need to participate in and play a role in forming the public debate on pluralism and moral engagement (2009: 42).

A decade prior to this report, reformist Tariq Ramadan had also issued a general call for European Muslims to take the opportunities for ‘intra-community dialogue’ in Europe, where Muslims must live with Islamic difference.

⁴⁷ Based on a project bringing Muslim academics and Muslim professionals together in order to identify obstacles preventing Muslim dialogue in the context of Britain. The report is available for download at <http://www.cis.cam.ac.uk/reports/post/46-contextualising-islam-in-britain-exploratory-perspectives>

It is becoming urgent, at least at the local level, to resume dialogue within the Muslim community. The stakes are far too important and the challenges far too serious for us to go on ignoring, criticising and fighting one another. Judgements on institutional or dress appearances, on real or supposed national allegiances, on genuine or contrived Islamic belonging, should no longer prevent those who advocate the idea that it is possible to live in harmony in Europe from holding a dialogue, acting in concert and exchanging views (Ramadan, 1999: 220).

The possibility of intra-faith dialogue in the Muslim Diaspora is indeed subject to the necessity of a “culture of dialogue” (ibid, p.220) or an “ethics of how to disagree” (Suleiman, 2009: 42). This is because sustained attempts at interaction across the most significant Muslim religious and ethnic divides in the context of national level representation of Muslim communities have so far failed, as we have witnessed in Chapter 2. However, Islam still becomes the main identity for many Muslims in Britain at times when they have been attacked as such by others, for instance during the Rushdie affair (Ansari, 2004: 4) but also more significantly since ‘9/11’ and ‘7/7’, or to a lesser extent whenever there is a strong need to communicate on an issue of rights or recognition with the wider society.

In such contexts, there have been instances of co-operation between Muslims, although rather than dialogue there has been a strategic stepping away from religious differences to enable the greater good of the community. For example, like councils of mosques up and down the country, the Bradford Council for Mosques (BCM) was constituted in 1981 as an elected body to represent Muslim congregations in the city comprising the aforementioned ethnic and sectarian components (Lewis, 1994: 143).

Advocating Muslim rights, especially concerning education, *halal* food and the Honeyford Affair (ibid, p.147), the BCM played a vital role in temporarily transcending the Deobandi-Barelwi split, and during the Rushdie Affair launched a national-level campaign (ibid, p.160). Nonetheless, the BCM could not bring all Sunni Muslim communities together on religious practices, such as the *salat* timetable and the dates for starting *Ramadan* or celebrating the *'eids* (see ibid, p.171). This clarifies the reality that, while representing a space 'beyond sectarianism,' it lacked the religious authority to allocate a precise time for very common religious practices in the same locality. The same could be argued, too, of Muslim umbrella organisations on the national level, such as the Muslim Council of Britain, although it represents an alliance of reformists (McLoughlin, 2005c, 2010). In what follows is a case study examining the disagreement within the Sunni Muslim community on such religious practices in Leeds.

5.2. Local-level presentation of Muslims' intra-faith relations and interactions with the wider society:

As regards religious belief and practices, the most visible aspect of diversity amongst Sunni Muslims in Leeds can be seen in terms of the timetable for rituals, for example daily, Friday and the *'eid* prayers. Despite sharing a *madhab* and living in the same locality, ethnicity and particular religious orientations ensure that there are divergences in belief and practice as well as over authority. For instance, a religious expert, Sheikh Muhammad (42), describes the ethnic character of the Muslim communities in Leeds:

The Muslims are not united in religious practices. They are disunited because it is the way they have grown up. Typically, here, they follow imams of the *masjid*, the local community. I mean the majority of the Muslim community is Pakistani, and they are from the same origin, so they are relatives, uncles, nephews, nieces, and this is how they are mixed. So if they are praying in a local *masjid*, and the imam says to them: tomorrow is *eid* and we are going to celebrate *eid*, they feel okay, and they do not care about what others are doing because they are connected, they are family. For example, [this is the case] in Beeston. In Dewsbury they are mainly Gujarati Indian background and they feel okay because they will celebrate in Dewsbury and they do not care about the rest (interviewed on May 31, 2011).

As clearly indicated in the above quotation, the Muslim community in Diaspora, wherever its country of origin, still emphasises ethno-cultural aspects of the religion as far as religious belief, practice, and authority are concerned. In Chapter 4 I have presented an overview of the local Sunni Muslim communities by introducing four different mosques representing the ethnic and religious diversity. I have also discussed some key points in differences of religious beliefs and practices. Here, in this section, in order to understand the religious diversity more comprehensively, as a case study, I have examined an important celebration and congregational prayer, namely the *'eid al-adha*, in the life of Sunni Muslims in Leeds. In the first section (5.2.1), I will reflect different attitudes of selected mosques towards defining the time for the *'eid* prayer. I will also reflect the views of ordinary Muslims regarding that difference. In the subsequent section (5.2.2), I will examine the views of *'ulama*

including the mosque imams and religious experts on the diversity of times set for such a ritual. I will also investigate what attempts have been made so far to create unanimity in celebrating such a ritual and starting Ramadan at the same time, in the same locality.

5.2.1. A dilemma for the Muslim community in Leeds: When shall we celebrate ‘*eid al-adha* this year?

The disagreement over the day of ‘*eid al-adha* is a regularly occurring conflict amongst Muslim countries, and hence there is an implication for that in the UK too. In 2010, Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM), Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC), and Leeds Iqra Centre (IC) prayed and celebrated the ‘*eid* along with Saudi Arabia, on 16 November. In contrast to these mosques, Leeds Makkah Masjid (LMM), and consequently other Barelwi mosques, prayed a day later, on 17 November. The controversy over the day of ‘*eid al-adha* for Leeds’s Sunni Muslims turns on the Barelwi-Deobandi and Sufi-Wahhabi conflict elaborated briefly above (see more details in Chapter 2).

On the one hand, the LGM, LIC, and IC simultaneously announced that Saudi Arabia had confirmed the day of Arafat, the ninth of the month of *Dhul-Hijjah* (in the Islamic calendar) on which one of the obligatory (*fard*) parts of the *hajj* is held, as being 15 November according to the *hajj* authority in Saudi Arabia.⁴⁸ Therefore, the claim was made that the day after would be ‘*eid*, and so it should be celebrated on 16 November. On the other hand, the LMM justified itself with an explanation about the

⁴⁸ <http://theislamicnews.com/saudi-arabia-announced-eid-al-adha-on16th-november/> (Accessed 15 November 2010)

sighting of the new moon for *Dhul-Hijjah*, the first day for this month. After listing a number of different countries with Muslim populations that celebrate the 'eid on the same day as LMM, its website says:

This is not an exhaustive list but confirms that the majority of Muslims are celebrating Eid on Wednesday 17th November. This includes the Muslims of Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Morocco, India and Bangladesh, where moon sighting rather than calculation for the presence of the new moon is used to determine the start of the new months, in accordance with the Prophetic Sunnah. Of note, the 10 official Saudi sighting committees did NOT see the new moon on Saturday 6th November (which is not surprising as it was scientifically impossible to do so, and means that the first of Dhul Hijjah should have been Monday 8th November and thus Eid on Wednesday 17th) but as usual some spurious reports of sighting were accepted.⁴⁹

Thus it was that Muslims in Leeds who have different ethnic and religious and geographic backgrounds prayed and celebrated the same ritual on two different days. It is noticeable that, despite the majority of the congregation in the LIC and IC being of South Asian ethnicity, these mosques united with the Arabs in following Saudi Arabia in the *hajj* timing there. Here, I attempt to find answers to what has been done by Muslim communities in order to be united in the time of 'eid al-adha or 'eid al-fitr (the end of Ramadan), and whether any dialogue or initiative has been held to prevent disagreement in the city. This was something I discussed with the imams of the aforementioned mosques in Leeds.

⁴⁹ www.makkahmasjid.co.uk/wp/index.php/2010/11/08/eid-ul-adha-2010/ (Accessed on 13 November 2010)

The imams confirmed that there is a debate about the methodology of identifying the time for the start of Ramadan, and then for the two *'eids*. Concerning Muslims in the UK Diaspora: a) some follow the closest Muslim country's method of sighting the moon, which is Morocco; b) some follow Saudi Arabia since it is the home of Islam's two holiest cities, and is the location within which the *hajj* pilgrimage is actually performed;⁵⁰ c) some rely on a combination of more local sighting and scientific calculation;⁵¹ and d) some follow their country of origin (such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iraq, etc.). In Leeds Muslims currently tend to follow b, c, and d. However, two points are key.

Firstly, the sighting of the new moon methodology (*ru'yat-i hilal*) is based on a Prophetic tradition that suggests "when you see the crescent, begin fasting; and when you see the crescent again break the fast (*'eid*). If the weather is cloudy, complete 30 days of *Sha'ban*, then begin fasting."⁵² In fact, there are a number of controversial views about physical moon sighting that branch out into the question of whether only one sighting anywhere in the world is enough for the whole Muslim community, or whether each locality should have its own local sighting (Shah, 2009: 9-13). Secondly, as to the astronomic calculation, it differs from one country to another because of the globe's shape, as can be seen in the diversity of local times. Islam is not incompatible with positive science and astronomy, so if it is scientifically proved that the days of Ramadan commence and finish at a certain time, then it should not

⁵⁰ www.croydonmosque.com/pdf/The_History_of_the_UK_following_the_Saudi_Arabia.pdf (Accessed on 21 April 2011)

⁵¹ See some well-known moon-sighting organisations such as www.moonsighting.com; www.islamicmoon.com; and www.icoproject.org.

⁵² Compare the prominent *hadith* books: *Sahih al-Bukhari*, 2 Vols. (Miṣr [Egypt]: al-Maṭba'ah al-Bahiyah, 1343 [1924]), Vol.1 p.215; *Sahih al-Muslim*, (al-Qāhirah: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1955), Vol.2, p.757-8; and *Al-Muwatta*, (Cairo: Dār Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah, 1951) p. 286.

be a problem for Muslims to abide by local timing in every part of the world as they do five times daily for prayer (*salat*). As a result, the first point is the fundamental method for Muslims since it based on the Prophet's application. For the second, despite there being no specific rule forbidding the use of scientific calculation, Muslims avoid using it.

Historically, the early jurists, including Hanafis, Malikis, Hanbalis and some Shafi'is, agreed upon 'the unity of horizons' [only one sighting anywhere in the world is enough for all Muslims in different places], but later on the majority of Shafi'i scholars stated that each locality has its own local sighting, like having its five times daily prayer timings, namely *fajr*, *zuhr*, *asr*, *maghrib*, and *'isha* (see Shah, 2009: 9-11). The last view, 'the diversity of horizons' (*ikhtilaf-e metali*) gained more credibility over the centuries until the twentieth century. However, in the second half of that century, religious affairs ministries of the majority of Muslim countries organised international meetings to reach a resolution for beginning the month of *Ramadan* and *'eid* days. A number of discussions were held at meetings in Kuala Lumpur (1969), Kuwait (1973), Istanbul (1978), Dakar (1985), Jeddah (1985), and finally in Amman (1986), with the decision shown below being agreed in the last meeting:

- 1) All Muslims should abide by this decision if the crescent is seen anywhere in the world, since the relevant Prophetic traditions (on starting Ramadan and announcing the two *'eids*) are addressed to all the Muslim community, and the *ikhtilaf-e matali*' (diversity of horizons) is not considered valid anymore. 2) The determination (of the beginning and ending for the fasting and the feasts) must be based on *ru'yati hilal* (moon

sighting), but one may benefit from astronomic calculations and data which do not contradict the Prophetic tradition.⁵³

However, despite the above ‘decision’, in reality the majority of participant countries still apply their own rules, as can be seen by the different ‘*eid* day celebrations across the Muslim world. Nonetheless, within a Muslim country, different practices on the timing of *eid* are rarely seen since there is a national religious authority, whether the state itself or the related presidency of religious affairs, and so Muslims follow the decision taken. Local sighting of the new moon or astronomic calculation binds Muslims who live in the same country. However, amongst the Muslim communities living as a minority in non-Muslim countries, following the decisions taken in their home countries makes the situation even more complex.

General calls by “the Fiqh Council of North America (2006) and the European Council for Fatwa and Research (2007)” to use astronomical calculations for precise dates (Shah, 2009: p. 87 and p.140, respectively) alongside the sighting of the new moon with the naked eye have not yet solved the timing issue. As a result, for a Muslim who lives in the West, the situation is more problematic and confusing: whose ‘*eid* day is correct? What if I am in the wrong? These and similar questions are naturally raised by the Muslims.

In terms of Islamic law, during Ramadan, a believer must not break the fast, neither the first day nor the last, since it breaches the Qur’an- based rule “Whoever of you is present this month (*Ramadan*), must fast during it” (2: 185) and its implementation

⁵³ See full list of the participant countries in 'Hilal', in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi (Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopaedia of Islam)*, ed. by the Foundation Committee (İstanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1998).

by the Prophet. However, a believer must not fast on the first day of the two festivals (*'eid al-fitr* and *al-adha*) according to the Prophetic tradition (*Sahih Al-Bukhari*, p.223; *Sahih Al-Muslim*, p.803-4; *Al-Muwatta'*, p. 300), either. Furthermore, regarding the sacrifice, the Prophet ordered anyone who had slaughtered an animal before *'eid salat* (prayer) to slaughter another, as the previous one had no religious value, but was merely normal meat.⁵⁴ As a result, a religious person might ask this question: I live in the same city as other Muslims; I am going to celebrate *'eid al-adha* a day earlier than other Muslims do. If I am wrong about the determination of the correct date, my sacrifice will be invalid. Thus, Muslims in the same locality put their religious rituals in danger if there is confusion. However, if all Muslims are united in the same locality and yet are mistaken, it would not be a problem when we consider the objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shari'a*).⁵⁵

5.2.2. The views of ordinary Muslims and religious experts on celebrating *'eid al-adha* on different days:

After giving this theological overview, I can go back to my case study in Leeds where the situation of Muslim communities conforms to the general patterns mentioned above. Typically, ethno-cultural and religious diversity shows itself in

⁵⁴ A couple of traditions are narrated in this regard: “Anybody who slaughtered (his sacrifice) before the prayer should slaughter another animal in lieu of it, and the one who has not yet slaughtered should slaughter the sacrifice chanting Allah's name on it,” and “The first thing to be done on this day (first day of Eid al Adha) is to pray; and after returning from the prayer we slaughter our sacrifices (in the name of Allah) and whoever does so, he acts according to our *Sunna* (traditions) and whosoever slaughters before the prayer, then his performance of the rite is nullified and he has presented just the meat to his family.” See, *Sahih Al-Bukhari*, p.114.

⁵⁵ Muslims in a Muslim country must obey the rulings and decision taken by the religious authority. Different dates for the *eids* between Muslim countries is normal. However, if there is a disagreement within the same country, it will be problematic in the sense that creating schism in the same religious practice, as far as Islamic law is concerned.

following a particular country for religious rites. Arabs follow Saudi Arabia; South Asians follow Pakistan, Bangladesh, or India. However, in terms of religious orientation, within the community of South Asians, reformists at the LIC (Deobandi and Tabligh-i Jama‘at) and the IC (Jama‘ati Islami) prefer to follow Saudi Arabia like the LGM, because the *hajj* duty is performed in this country according to its calendar. A week before *‘eid-al-adha*, the websites belonging to the above-mentioned mosques announce that the *‘eid* day is to be confirmed when Saudi Arabia declares it. The 63-year-old religious expert, Dr. Hasan al-Katib, a member of the congregation at LGM and one describing himself as an active member of the Muslim Brotherhood, says:

Of course, we should be united in localities; we should be united in Leeds and Britain, since as one country we have one timing. [But], there are some hierarchies, you know, leaders who might lose their respect or command of the people if they follow others. ... *‘eid al fitr* is isolated, but [with] *‘eid al-adha* they should try more to agree with the rest, so this is unfortunate and this indicates how traditional they are.

This quotation suggests that Muslims in Leeds are divided in terms of competing religious authorities and between reformists who follow Saudi Arabia and traditionalists who do not. Another religious expert from a reformist background, Ershad (42) from the IC, argues that:

This is the problem that every Muslim, whether a common person, a scholar, a labourer, or very highly educated person, feels the need to solve, and, what I think is that we should have some sort of mechanism to make it

together. There is a lot of discussion about how we do it, but this is not right because we are giving the wrong message towards children and the wider society as well, so it is not a good message of Islam, either. Because people make jokes a lot by saying, you know, ‘there is the moon’, ‘we cannot see the moon still’, or ‘when is your moon coming’?

Especially “in local schools non-Muslims are really confused with different days for the *‘eid*, and, as a result, religious holidays for Muslim pupils ... it is a shame for us” says taxi driver, Haji Abdurrauf (54-year-old), a member of the congregation at the LIC (interviewed on 19 March 2011). Another ordinary Muslim from the Sufi-Barelwi tradition, Shahsat (a 24- year-old working in a supermarket), states:

I think Muslims should leave their practical agendas aside and for the sake of the community, not community for the sake of *akhirah* (the hereafter), leave their differences aside and come together... I am shocked that in Great Britain we have three different starting days for Ramadan (interviewed on February 10, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, the Muslim communities in Britain use different reference points in identifying the time for religious practices. Following the Prophetic *sunnah* method, sighting the new moon with a naked eye, a problem occurs because clear visibility of the moon is almost impossible in Britain as the weather is frequently overcast. Alternatively, the nearest Muslim country is made a reference point for timing of religious practices. One of the leading religious experts in Leeds, Qari Asim (34), from a Sufi-Barelwi background, states that:

Muslims in Britain used to follow Morocco about 25 years ago. You look at astronomy here that says it would have been visible; albeit you cannot see it with the naked eye because of the clouds. Others say, you know, it comes to schools of thought, because of the very strong Saudi followers, who say forget Morocco, forget science - just follow Saudi Arabia. Now it is hard to believe, but if Saudi Arabia is right, if they do everything fine then it is not [going to] become an issue here. Because Saudi Arabia is in the east the sun rises there and the moon in the west, and astronomic data says that there is no chance, you know, it would have been seen in Saudi Arabia. And Saudi Arabia, I think, has 14 committees, one in Riyadh, one in Makkah, one in Madina, and others, and all of them say, "No, we have not seen the moon," but then one person goes to court and says, "I have seen it" and they say the *shahadah* (testimony) of a Muslim testimony and that is the end of it...

And there are no logical people to ask why we have all [the] technology and why are people in these committees here [Why we rely on only one person's observation]. That is again because of the other divisions: people are blind, following their own school of thought or groups, they do not want to hear someone else, and they do not care what others do. That is the key issue affecting representation of Muslims in this country.

This quotation summarises what is going on among the Muslim community in Leeds, and more broadly in the UK. Every Muslim community knows that there is something wrong in terms of implementation, but the problem is over whose argument is correct and who is going to decide that. The absence of a single religious authority is the main factor. In addition, 'blindly' sticking to traditions and close

links to home countries are other factors that have influenced Sunni Muslims in Leeds.

According to the above statement of Qari Asim, Muslims follow Saudi Arabia blindly, or because of their school of thought. It is true that, according to prominent scholars in Saudi Arabia, (apart from the method of the Prophet Muhammad in identifying the beginning of Ramadan), other methods, for instance astronomic calculation, is in the category of an innovation (*bid'ah*)⁵⁶. Meanwhile, however, the Saudi scholars do not necessarily say that all the Muslim community or other countries must follow Saudi Arabia on that day. Rather they advise that Muslims should follow the opinion of their Muslim ruler if there is a disagreement on seeing the moon; and that in a non-Muslim country, they should follow the decision taken by the local Islamic centre.⁵⁷

On the other hand, although the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) rejects a lay person's sighting of the new moon (2007, *fatwa* book 2, *fatwa* 8) and encourages the communities to utilise modern scientific calculations in accordance with the Prophetic method, Muslim communities (e.g. the LGM) insist on following Saudi Arabia, not only during Ramadan, but also *eid al-adha*. The statement of

⁵⁶ The Permanent Committee for Scholarly Research and Ifta' has issued a relevant fatwa, and concluded that to use another method would be an innovation while there is clear evidence from the sources of the Islamic religion. Therefore, in practice, the Prophet Muhammad never linked moon sighting to any astronomical calculations or the movements of the stars. This methodology has also been applied by the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Four Imams (Abu Hanifah, Malik, Al-Shafi'i, and Ahmad), and the Salaf, the early pious ancestors. See the fatwa on <http://www.alifta.net/Fatawa/FatawaChapters.aspx?View=Page&PageID=3501&PageNo=1&BookID=7>

⁵⁷ Ibid, see more fatwas under Group 1, Volume 10: Zakah and Sawm, Sawm, The new moons, different places of sighting the new moon and astronomical calculations.

another religious expert, Mawlana Yousef, ex-imam of the LIC, reflects some other facts affecting South Asian Muslims:

History and family traditions have value; many Muslims here prioritise family and culture other than the religion. Islam on the TV and Google, these are really jahalet (ignorance) contradictory to Islam. Regarding *'eid al-adha*, two years ago we tried to solve this problem. Followers of the Tablighis and Barelwis, moon community or moon sighting, we only discussed [these] but no solution came out.

No matter who they are, whether Barelwi, Deobandi, or any other orientation, every Muslim complains about the practice of sticking to the customs and tradition blindly in the context of Britain. Certainly, there have been attempts to come together and solve the timing problem for the beginning and ending of *Ramadan*, and the day of sacrifice, as Mawlana Yousef pointed out. From an ordinary Muslim's point of view, that of Mukarram (37), a self employed and regular member of the congregation at the IC, it is difficult to come and negotiate with other Muslims in order to solve such problems. He further states:

To be honest, the organisation that I work with, this is Jama'ati Islami, we try our best to sort these differences out, like I said, we try to provide a platform like an umbrella organisation for all the organisations to come together and, you know, solve the problems... For example we have about two or three *eids* every year, so last couple of years we have been trying hard to sort these differences out. Okay, fine, one is saying that we should follow Saudi Arabia; the other one is saying that no, we should go with the

local observatory. You know, we do not call these two different views as wrong. Okay, the only difference is a scholarly matter, but why cannot we sit on the table and sort these out? We tried that, a couple of years ago, we held a kind of meeting for all the scholars, but is not easy, not very easy to solve problems, we tried our best, but *inshallah* [if Allah wishes] one day they will... (interviewed on April 18, 2011).

One such meeting, on 11 October 2006, was held in the LMM with the attendance of delegates from 12 different mosques (including the other three mosques selected for this research). It brought together Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis, and Arabs. The delegates included the imams and the committee members of those mosques, as well as Muslim councillors from Leeds City Council, including Councillor Javaid Akhtar, Councillor Kabeer Hussain, Councillor Mohammed Rafique and the Lord Mayor of Leeds (2006-2007), Councillor Mohammed Iqbal, as well as public attendees numbering in total 200 people.⁵⁸ The attendance of local politicians illustrates that having different *'eid* days in the city is not only a religious matter, but also a social problem that needs to be resolved.

The meeting was also aired live on Radio Islam FM, which was broadcasting Islamic programmes in Leeds during the month of Ramadan, and played a central role in organising and inviting the mosques to this meeting. Initially, the delegates agreed on following the formula which takes the closest Muslim country, Morocco, as reference point. This country also uses the methodology of sighting the new moon as an indication of the start and end of the month of Ramadan. In the first session,

⁵⁸ See www.makkahmasjid.co.uk/wp/index.php/2006/10/16/a-meeting-for-a-united-eid/ (Accessed on 20 November 2011).

which lasted about one hour and a half, all participants agreed to apply the new formula. However, in the second session some mosque delegates (the LIC and Shah Jalal Masjid) suggested that the new formula should not be followed for this *'eid*, but for the next one, because the meeting was held within Ramadan and these mosques had started fasting by following Saudi Arabia. Thus, they disagreed on the feast day (*'eid al-fitr*) for that particular Ramadan (with the other mosques).

Jurisprudential aspects of fasting 31 days were also discussed, in terms of the scenario that would arise if the new crescent moon was to be seen on 22 October in Morocco. In that case, the representatives of the LIC and Shah Jalal Masjid suggested that the congregation in their mosques would have fasted 31 days if they agreed to celebrate *'eid* with the others. In the Islamic calendar, a month might be 29 or 30 days, never 31 days. As a result, the delegates proposed another meeting to come together and solve this issue after *'eid al-fitr*. However, they were unsuccessful. Since then, like the international-level meetings mentioned earlier, the mosques have been utilising their own formula, whether following Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Pakistan, and so on. Furthermore, Sheikh Muhammad (42), from the LGM, narrates his own observation and experience:

We tried to meet with the mosque imams and religious experts, in the Islamic Centre and Makkah Masjid. And straight away from the first hour, they started discussing things and disagreed, straight away. Because they came with [the intention] not to agree, they love to discuss it, Deobandi, Barelwi, whatever Ahmadi, Ahle Hadith - everyone will stand up to support his opinion.

I tried to establish a working [agreement] between [us and] Makkah Masjid. We agreed to start the Ramadan on the same day and celebrate *'eid al-fitr* accordingly, and *'eid al-adha* together. They said, "Okay", but after a while, they said, "Oh, hang on a minute, will you celebrate *'eid al-adha* with us or with Saudi Arabia?" We said, "If the hajj day is on Saudi Arabia we celebrate *'eid al-adha*", and they said, "Okay, we will not follow Saudi Arabia", so we could not establish an agreement on unity over one single prayer timetable.

From the other side, one of the deputy imams of LMM, Qari Qasim (32), also describes this situation in a similar vein:

It is quite sad that the differences exist on such an important matter, *'eid* or fasting, which is so fundamental. Two-three years ago we tried to get all different mosque imams and leaders, community members to have one *'eid* that would be *'eid al-fitr*. The meeting took place in Ramadan, so we had a big discussion that concluded that we are going to follow this, you are going to follow that. Those dialogues have been taking place, but no one is willing to leave their point of view. I do not know how this problem is going to be got over.

Nobody wants to abandon their own point of view; nobody is satisfied with the situation, either. However, every single community is a part of this dichotomy. In fact, Muslims in Leeds feel uncomfortable having different days for the *'eids*, but are hopeful that one day this problem will be solved, even if they do not know how. While everybody has a bias and justification for whatever they believe and practice,

there is no binding religious authority for them as the case in any other cities, such as Birmingham, Bradford, and London, in Britain. Some religious experts suggest, and for example, Sheikh Muhammad (42) argues, “the problem I think should be resolved through the community leaders, imams, scholars and the chairmen of the Islamic centres”. Qari Asim (34) points to current problems Muslims have in Britain:

Muslims really need to focus on their education, they need more intra-dialogue, but [there is] lack of knowledge, ignorance of each other which is breeding hatred and causing animosity. Intra-dialogue will be improved; Muslims need to show, you know, they are one community and that others (the wider society) [should] take notice of them. Blind imitation, because you are not strong enough, you are afraid to lose what you have, can only be destroyed with education.

To sum up, despite efforts to hold intra-faith dialogue on the timing issue for commencing the month of Ramadan, and determining *‘eid* days, such efforts have resulted in disappointment. In the year following my fieldwork research, 2011, mosques and organisations did the same thing, and started fasting and celebrating *‘eids* on different days. An obvious point to make is that there is no organisation or body which encapsulates all Muslim groups in Leeds, even though Leeds Muslim Forum (established in 2001) may suggest itself as a unifying organisation at first glance. However, as we shall see in the following section, in the same way as the Bradford Council for Mosques (Lewis, 1994: 145), it was mainly an attempt to communicate a common Muslim point of view to the wider society and local authorities. Sunni Muslim communities have also formed organisations which seem to include all Muslims in Leeds, such as “Leeds Muslim Council (established as a

charity in 1982)”⁵⁹ and the “Muslim Society of Leeds (founded in 2003, as a charity),”⁶⁰ but they are not as inclusive as their names suggest.

5.2.3. Leeds Muslim Forum: an umbrella body for interactions with the wider society at the local level

In this section, my aim is not to investigate interfaith activities in Leeds, nor to discuss theoretical and theological issues, as a recent research project (Prideaux, 2008) has thoroughly investigated these. Rather, my concern focuses on the history of the formation of a local representative body to manage Muslim interactions with the wider society. Leeds Muslim Forum (the LMF) is an establishment similar to the BCM (Lewis, 1994: 143), in that it seeks public recognition by putting aside religious and ethnic differences; however, it is not a very active body compared to the BCM, as we shall see below.

In the aftermath of the 9/11 bombing events, the frequent visits of non-Muslims and especially the media to Muslim places of worship compelled Muslim communities to form an organisation to address issues raised by the wider society. The first chairman of LMF, Dr. Hasan al-Katib from LGM, describes the formation process:

The Muslim community found themselves generally under attack by the media, which were accusing Muslims of doing the bombings, and as such newspaper representatives and reporters used to visit the mosques and

⁵⁹ It is the management committee of *al-Madina Masjid* and *Leeds Makkah Masjid*, and mainly focuses on children’s education in Leeds, LS6 and surrounding areas. See more information at <http://www.makkahmasjid.co.uk/>

⁶⁰ It is aiming to “develop and implement initiatives which shall enhance and enrich the education, training, employment, health, cultural recreational needs of the local and wider communities” in Leeds, LS7 and surrounding areas. See more information at <http://www.muslimsocietyofleeds.org.uk/>

question their imams about the event. Most of the imams are not equipped to handle the media, and even most of them do not speak fluent English, but have only concentrated on the duty of leading prayers and being concerned with the circle of Islam. ...So, when the media come to the imam, the imam refers them to the management committee, and the management are not necessarily fully aware of Islamic teachings, you know. ...the mosque committees called for a meeting and they sent representatives for the meeting, and they decided the best thing to do is to form a group that will take care of the media, answer their questions, and possibly organise other activities if they find it necessary. The group used to meet at the Pakistani Community Centre, next to Bilal Mosque but independently of that.

Dr. al-Katib himself in fact attended the second meeting, which was held in the same place, and he was elected as chairperson for the Forum, in 2001. Although there were other candidates from the Pakistani Muslim community for this role, the votes cast were substantially in favour of Dr. al-Katib. At that time, Arabs were considered as being far removed from the Deobandi-Barelwi conflicts. According to Dr. al-Katib,

they found it a safe selection to have a representative from Arab ethnicity, and as well as being Arab, someone active in the mosque, it was ideal. I was active amongst the Asian Muslims since I came to Leeds in 1991; you know I had about 10 years' experience and contacts. Amongst the Arabs, I was possibly the most known to them.

After having a number of weekly meetings, the LMF's constitution began to take shape, consisting of four sub-groups. One group would deal with the media, either

writing articles or answering the reporters' enquiries. The second would handle issues concerning children's education, including communicating with local education authorities. The third one concerned activities for Muslim women, and the last one inter-faith activities. There was no fixed venue for the forum meetings, which took place sometimes in the Pakistani Community Centre, or in the Arshad Chaudry accountants' office on Roundhay Road, and sometimes at the homes of the group members. There was an attempt to establish a centre for the forum on Roundhay Road, but since the activities declined in parallel with the interest of Muslim communities, this idea did not go any further. Financially, the forum was supported by local businessmen.

The forum only attracted interest among Muslims in its early days, and later on with the 7/7 London bombing events; otherwise interest and participation gradually declined. Dr. al-Katib maintains,

we really wanted to get involved and organise functions at each of the mosques, but the members of the mosques also pulled out, not attending the meeting, so they lost interest. They felt that we were taking over their role by functioning in the mosques through organisations and events. Because of the background and their different way of thinking, you know, that is why they have become like ghettos, you know... We came back to life again with the 7th July event, which was far more dynamic than the event of 9/11, because the suspects in this event came from Leeds...

It was the personal endeavours of Dr. al-Katib to interact with other faith group representatives within Leeds Faith Forum (the LFF, a local interfaith organisation

established in 1997 to promote better understanding of the diverse ethnic and religious communities of Leeds) that initiated a public meeting in the Millennium Square to condemn the terrorist attacks. He states further,

the Faith Forum stood beside us, defending our community, because we are all against such kinds of acts and our principles are against it, and this is in general how we showed that we share a lot of values.

The LMF was involved in inter-faith activities with the LFF at the organisational level, because the latter is not open to the public. There is another interfaith group in Leeds, Concord (www.concord-leeds.org.uk) that is open to individuals from any faith group. Generally, the selected mosques for this research, except the LIC, are involved in interfaith activities with this group. To mention a few activities for interfaith, they consist of visiting the worship places, exchanging knowledge about belief and practices, holding school exhibitions and carrying out other common acts of goodness in local neighbourhoods such as visiting elderly and sick people.

It was the LMF that acted as the representative body for Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds in participating in interfaith activities throughout the city. According to Prideaux (2008: 211), the most notable formal interfaith activity across the city was in the form of the ‘Trust or Terror’ meetings between Christians and Muslims in the aftermath of the 7/7 bombings event. Later on, the interfaith activities focused on knowing more about each other’s faith. For example, one such event was held in the LGM on 24 November 2010. There were two representatives: one, the Catholic David Jackson, introduced a report called “Meeting God In Friend and Stranger” written by Catholic bishops; and the other, the Muslim, Dr. Hasan al-Katib,

introduced a book called “A Common Word”, written by 100 prominent Muslim scholars around the world. Both representatives focused on commonalities as human beings being challenged by the same circumstances in the world.

The LMF’s activities gradually decreased because of the lack of interest from the Muslim community in general and the inactivity of the subsequent chairpersons, according to Dr. al-Katib. He maintains that:

Many others and I thought to select someone to inject new ideas and put life in the LMF, so we elected someone who was originally from Malaysia. He never called any meeting nor did anything. I even tried to involve Leeds Faith Forum, and managed to get a Chair[person] on the board to come together and create ideas, and again he pulled away due to his busy work commitments... So we carried on about 10 years, and it [the LMF] closed down...Possibly it was being the chairman of the [Leeds Faith] forum that made me more known to the community and when I got more known to the local authority, Leeds Faith Forum at one stage was asked to send a delegation to represent the faith in the city. They had an executive board representing all the leadership in the city, like the vice-chancellor, the director of housing and commerce, so all were represent there. And I was there, and another priest representing faith in the city. So we became more known to the people who are involved in politics, so I am still getting invited to the events to attend and represent the Muslim communities in Leeds.

The life of the LMF lasted about ten years as the representative body for Muslim communities in Leeds, and the only legacy remaining from that period is the person of Dr. Hasan al-Katib and his efforts and activities in the cause of interaction with the wider society.

5.3. Conclusion

This chapter has sought to describe the place of intra-Muslim interactions in the life of Sunni Muslims in terms of religious beliefs, practices, and the representation of Muslim communities to the wider society. We have reviewed the reality of religion in the context of Britain where the Muslim society consists of multi-ethnic and diverse religious components. Ethno-cultural differences and different religious orientations prevent Muslims from pursuing any possible intra-faith dialogue at the local level. The need for ‘an ethic of how to disagree’ is the key element for the Muslim communities to practise intra-faith dialogue. To sum up with the statement of Qari Asim:

We should understand each other’s position better. If we disagree with the people we should disagree in a [certain] way, [but] we should not try to cut them off. Actually we have a register of exclusion, we very quickly exclude people, and *takfir* [blame for being infidel] is very common, yeah, [but] we do not have a register of inclusion, and we do not include people. Although he is not doing the same thing as me, he is still a Muslim, is [the meaning of] that inclusion.

The case study conducted in Leeds during ‘*eid al-adha*’ in 2010 has indicated that Muslim communities find it extremely difficult to unite over the timing of a religious

practice, which must be fulfilled at the same time by people living in the same geographical location, according to Islamic Law. Moreover, in the absence of one single religious authority for all, nobody wants to abandon his own point of view. Attempts at ‘united Ramadan and ‘*eid*’ meetings in Leeds culminated in disappointments for the organisers and the society generally. As for the interactions with the wider society, the creation of the LMF was merely a product of push-pull factors, given that the wider society’s demands compelled the Muslim community to form it. Once it had completed its immediate mission after the 9/11 and 7/7 bombing events, the forum became passive and eventually closed down.

Chapter 6

Religious authority among Sunni Muslims in Leeds

In Islam, the ultimate source of religious authority is unambiguous. As a guide to how believers should behave, the Qur'an proclaims its religious and moral authority based on its being the very word of Allah (*kalamullah*). The word '*kalam*' is one of the attributes of Allah according to Islamic theology, meaning that Allah talks with the believers via His books, and explains the books by sending the prophets amongst the believers. Consequently, the supreme religious authority is Allah; and the messengers deliver the message, interpret the verses, and apply that teaching to their own and their followers' lives. After the death of the Prophet Muhammad, it was his *sunnah* including his sayings, approvals, and advice to the Muslim community, that continued with this mediator role. As far as producing religious rulings or deriving the rules from the Qur'an and the Sunnah is concerned, the '*ulama* bear in mind first that they should do as the prophet said: "*the scholars are the heirs of the prophets.*"⁶¹

Although there is no clergy class in Sunni Islam, the '*ulama* include the imam or *sheikh* (who leads the prayer and gives sermons), the *mufti* (who gives *fatwas*), the '*alim* (scholar), the *mujtahid* (who derives rules from the sources and updates existing ones in line with the current age), and others⁶² all play a pivotal role as religious authorities for Muslims. In non-Muslim countries, like Britain, mosques

⁶¹ Abu Davud, Ilm 1: (3641); Tirmidhi, Ilm 19: (2683); Ibn Mace, Mukaddime 17: (223)

⁶² See for more definitions and the functions of ulama: 'Ulama', in the Encyclopaedia of Religion.

have a special institutional importance in terms of observance of religious duties, as we witnessed in Chapter 4. Consequently, mosque imams as the first line of religious authority for the congregation are often the leading voices to guide Muslims and direct them in practicing their religion, though their qualifications to do so can differ quite dramatically (Barton, 1986; Lewis, 1993 and 1994).

In this chapter, I shall begin with a discussion of religious authority in Islam in an historical context, examining key developments from the early days of Islam until today. To discover what religious authority is for Sunni Muslims in Britain, I will first introduce the four imams of the selected mosques, whose different ethnic and religious orientations were reflected in Chapter 4. I will compare them in terms of the functions they perform at the mosque and their impact on the mosque attendees as sources of religious authority. Thereafter, I will review the content of religious rulings and advice given by the imams to the Sunni Muslim community in Leeds, and give some examples of *fatawa* (plural of *fatwa*) issued in the context of Britain. In particular, I will benefit from the *fatawa* of two important religious figures who reside in the vicinity of Leeds, namely *Sheikh Abdullah al-Judai* and *Sheikh Abdurrahman*.⁶³ The former has issued *fatawa* as a member of the ECFR, and is also official *mufti* of the LGM. The latter is a Deobandi scholar and I will reflect on my observation of his conference presentation at the LIC on 12 December 2010. I shall also include a section about the usage of the internet as a source for religious authority. In all of the above, I am going to provide an account of the patterns of religious authority among Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds.

⁶³ This is not real name of the *sheikh*, it has been created to anonymise him.

6.1. Religious authority in Islam:

The primary sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad's *Sunnah*, have been the religious and moral authority for believers since the religion was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 A.D. However, for the last two centuries, debates and disputes over the *'ulama* as traditional representatives of religious authority have been common, especially amongst reformists. As I discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, Muslims have faced a number of economic, political, social and cultural as well as religious transformations in their encounter with modernity, and certainly from the 20th century religious authority has been challenged and reshaped with the formation of nation states, mass education, individualisation, scientific secular thinking, and so on (Rahman, 1979; Kurzman, 2002; Rippin 2003). Some legal positions, such as those of legal jurists, *qadis* or juristconsults, and *muftis* under the religious banner, either disappeared or were much reduced from their earlier authoritative roles in Muslim lands. Subsequently, a number of disputes arose between modern state structures as a new source of legal authority and a segment of traditional authority (the *'ulama*).

Moreover, as Zaman (2009: 2007) has pointed out, "the [position of the] *'ulama* was scarcely uncontested before the emergence of the college- and university-educated new religious intellectuals" who tried to "re-form" Islamic thought by emphasising reopening the closed *ijtihad* gate. In fact, this contestation is not limited to the modern era, or with the *'ulama*; it goes further back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 and the question of who was eligible to succeed Him as a religious and political authority. The first four caliphs, Abu Bakr, 'Omar, Othman,

and ‘Ali, held both religious and political authority. Until the first decades of the 8th century, according to Hallaq (2005: 178), the main legal experts were “*proto-qadis*”, who were employees and administrators in governmental institutions but non-professionals. Hallaq states:

they had no particular legal training...they adjudicated cases on the basis of their *ra’y* [view], which was based in turn on either a *sunna madiya* (past exemplary actions, including those of the Prophet and the caliphs) or commonsense (2005: 178).

When Islam spread out of the Arabian Peninsula, the burden of the caliph’s role as both a religious and political authority lessened with the emergence of provincial governors and ministers. However, most of these did not have legal training because there was no legislation system or legal code. Additionally, the embrace of non-Arab traditions and local cultures by Islam is another factor that promoted the emergence of “legal specialists or jurists who initiated the formation of Islamic Law” (ibid, p.179). From the beginning of the 8th century to the first half of the 9th, the four Sunni legal specialists, namely Imam Abu Hanifa (703-67), Imam Malik (717-801), Imam Shafi‘i (769-820), and Imam Ahmad Ibn Hanbal (778-855), began to introduce their regionally distinctive jurisprudential methodologies to derive specialist rules from the Islamic sources and so guide the Muslim community.

Thus, orthodoxy and orthopraxy in Islamic beliefs and practices based on the legal sources of Islam, the Qur’an, the *Sunnah*, *Ijma* (consensus), and *Qiyas* (reasoning by analogy), was institutionalised and developed into plural Sunni *madhahib* or schools of law. In practical terms, the different classes of ‘*ulama*, as indicated above,

obtained positions in the judiciary (*shari‘a* courts), educational institutions (general and Islamic learning), and in places of worship, or Sufi orders (Waardenburg, 2002: 387-390). “[At] the heart of the process of shaping Muslim societies” (Robinson, 2009: 341), they diffused knowledge of Islam to their pupils and followers, and as a result became the central point of religious authority in every cluster of the society, whether in a *madrasa* as a teacher, or in a Sufi group as a Sufi Sheikh.

This situation lasted until the 19th century, since when “the authoritative transmission of Islamic knowledge and its authoritative interpretation has broken down” (Robinson, 2009: 345). The advent of colonialism gave rise to a number of transformations in military matters, education, law, and politics at the hands of the British, French, Dutch, Germans, and Italians. For instance in India, as Muhammad Q. Zaman notes:

New judicial institutions began to be established on a British model from the late eighteenth century, and, though Islamic and Hindu law was retained in matters of personal status (notably marriage, divorce, and inheritance), it was by judges trained not in the *shari‘a* but in English common law that it was implemented (2009: 212).

Furthermore, the governmental support for the *‘ulama* was abolished for the sake of modernisation. “New forms of knowledge had to be mastered for success in the world of western dominance” (Robinson, 2009: 346), by sending students to the western universities rather than to *al-Azhar* and other educational centres in Arabia and Asia. According to Robinson (2009: 347), there was an overwhelming feeling that Muslims had failed, and particularly the *‘ulama*. Furthermore, he argues that in

addition to the *'ulama's* power being lost, which precipitated a crisis of authority, their response to the questions posed by western power exacerbated this crisis in the Indian context. The *'ulama* of Lucknow Farangi Mahall and *Barelwis* insisted on traditional scholarship; Deobandis opposed some aspects of Sufi practices; the *Ahle Hadith* rejected almost all classical scholarship like the *Salafiyya* movement in the Middle East (Robinson, 2009: 348). In a similar vein, Zaman (2006: 153-80) discusses in detail the lack of consensus among the *'ulama* and intellectuals in both the Middle East and Indian subcontinent, in the modern age. According to Robinson (2009: 348-9), from the beginnings of reform in the 19th century, the heart of the *'ulama's* authority (the oral, person-to-person transmission of knowledge) was attacked by the use of the print media and the translation of the Qur'an. They were compelled to do this because of being in competition both with missionaries from Christianity and other faiths and with the secular western educational system backed by the governmental support. The result was "the emergence of protestant Islam with a growth in literacy and non-*'ulama* or lay interpreters leading to further fragmentations and individualisation in religious authority" (ibid, 349-50). The contrast between the method and sources of religious authority in pre-modern and modern times is well summarised in Dale Eickelman's statement:

Religious authority in earlier generations derived from the mastery of authoritative texts studied under recognized scholars. Mass education fosters a direct, albeit selective, access to the printed word and a break with earlier traditions of authority (1992: 646).

In fact, the transformation of religious authority from the traditional form to a modern one produced, as Rahman (1979: 222) has argued, a split into two different directions: one towards “pure westernism”, and the other towards “revivalism”.

In the late modern and post-modern period, the fragmentation accelerated more with the “transformations of economy and society, creating new spheres of activity, classes of the population and relations to power” (Zubaida, 2009: 65) that culminated in the emergence of a new public sphere. Armando Salvatore (2009: 193-5) articulates an emerging public sphere in this reform project with its four conceptual elements, “*islah*, *maslaha*, the place of *Shari‘a*, and *ijtihad*” that subsequently became interrelated with each other in the reformation process. Over the last two centuries, these notions have been discussed, both by *‘ulama*, intellectuals, and lay people, as a result of gradual advancements of “wild growth interpretation, mass education, new media, and transnational developments” (Robinson, 2009: 350-53) in the Muslim world.

Of course, the *‘ulama* have also been benefiting from the usage of mass communication technologies and education facilities, initially the circulation of printed media, then audio-video cassettes, and television broadcasts both locally and internationally, and recently internet facilities (websites, discussion forums, video blogs, and so on). However, the proliferation of education and communication technologies makes religious authority more ambiguous. Sedgwick describes the current situation:

Across the Muslim world, recordings of preachers are popular listening for many. There are no exact figures, but at a rough estimate more than three

quarters of such recordings are by preachers who are not Ulema. Equally, there are no exact figures for the sales of books on religious subjects, but probably only one in ten of the best-selling authors on religious topics are from the Ulema. Instead, they are journalists, or lawyers, or physicians, and occasionally university professors. Increasingly, even engineers and computer scientists are coming to the fore (2006: 31).

Therefore, ‘Who speaks for Islam?’ and ‘Who is reliable in the sense of guiding towards the correct path?’ are only a couple of questions to bear in mind as far as religious belief and practices are concerned. The secularisation of social institutions throughout the Muslim world has left very little room for traditional religious authority to practice within the community. Thus, to borrow a useful expression from Robinson (2009: 353), “religious authority, in the helpful image of the French political scientist, Olivier Roy, has become a ‘bricolage’, a do-it-yourself-project.” Not only does individualisation of religious authority matter, but so also does individualisation in the implementation of religious belief and practices. The latter kind of individualisation is felt more acutely among the immigrant Muslim communities in non-Muslim countries, especially in Europe (see Peter, 2006: 105-118). Later in this chapter, we will witness instances of this sentiment among Muslims in Britain.

The *‘ulama*’s assertion of their religious authority has shown itself in the formation of a number of institutions, such as *fatwa* centres in Egypt and India (Deoband) in the late 19th century; the All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Indian Fiqh Academy in the 1970s and 1980s; and more recently the International Union for Muslim Scholars (Zaman, 2009: 226-7). In the European context, considering all the

aforementioned developments relating to religious authority over the last few decades, the *'ulama* have formed institutions in order to create an authoritative body for Muslims living in Europe. For example, the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) was established in 1997, with the general call by the Qatar-based Egyptian scholar Yusuf al-Qaradawi for forming a scholarly platform to lessen the ambiguity of religious authority as well as to address the European Muslim's unique religious needs that differ from those of Muslims residing in Islamic countries. The aims and objectives of ECFR are:

to promote a uniform Fatwa in Europe and to prevent controversy and intellectual conflicts regarding the respective issues wherever possible. In its endeavour to achieve this objective, it will use means of consultation, joint research as well as group Ijtihad, which has today become an Islamic obligation and necessity. The Council is also designed to become an approved religious authority before local governments and private establishments, which will undoubtedly strengthen and reinforce local Islamic communities.⁶⁴

The necessity for “a systematic formulation of the status of being in a minority” (Badawi, 1981: 27), and later on termed as “minority *fiqh*” as a legal doctrine -*Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat*- introduced in the 1990s by Taha Jabir Al-Alwani and Yusuf Al-Qaradawi (Parray, 2012: 88) has been strengthened with the establishment of the ECFR. With its various member profiles, which consist of 32 prominent scholars from all over the Muslim world, it asserts a religious authority for European Muslims

⁶⁴ Derived from the first fatwa book of the ECFR, *Fatwas of European Council for Fatwa and Research (Qararat Wa-Fatawa Al-Majlis Al-Urubbi Lil-Ifta' Wa-Al-Buhuth)*, translated by Anas Osama Al-Tikriti and Shakir Nasif Al-Ubaydi (Cairo: Islamic INC, 2000), p.9.

with annual meetings and *fatwa* collections.⁶⁵ With regard to individual legal deductions, according to Al-Qaradawi:

immunity from error has not been guaranteed to any individual within the community, no matter who that might be, but rather to the community as a whole is [it] guaranteed, based on the recorded saying of the Prophet Muhammad (cited in Zaman, 2006: 171) .

That makes him very ambitious to bring proficient scholars together to find solutions to the current problems Muslims face. Al-Qaradawi is generally described as the most influential of the '*ulama* in the contemporary Muslim world because he uses the print and electronic media, including satellite television and the internet, to disseminate his views and ideas all over the world. In doing so, as Mandaville (2007: 109) has claimed, he attempts to "re-center religious authority." He always emphasises the necessity of being in the mood of "*wasatiyya*", or finding the middle way in every sphere of life. The concept of the "middle way is one of the main features of Islamic law" according to him (Dien, 2004: 135). In the contemporary world, the contribution of current '*ulama* to Islamic law should be based on what Al-Qaradawi has explained regarding the content and method of *ijtihad* in his book, *Contemporary Ijtihad, Between Regulation and Disintegration*:

- 1) Selective *ijtihad* based on preference: the legal opinion is chosen from inherited Islamic Juridical legacy in order to stipulate rulings on it or to judge through it, to choose the stronger proof.
- 2) New rulings based on

⁶⁵ The Inaugural Meeting of the European Council for Fatwa and Research was held in London, UK, on 29 March 1997, but now the headquarters of this organisation is in Dublin, Ireland. See more information at www.e-cfr.org/

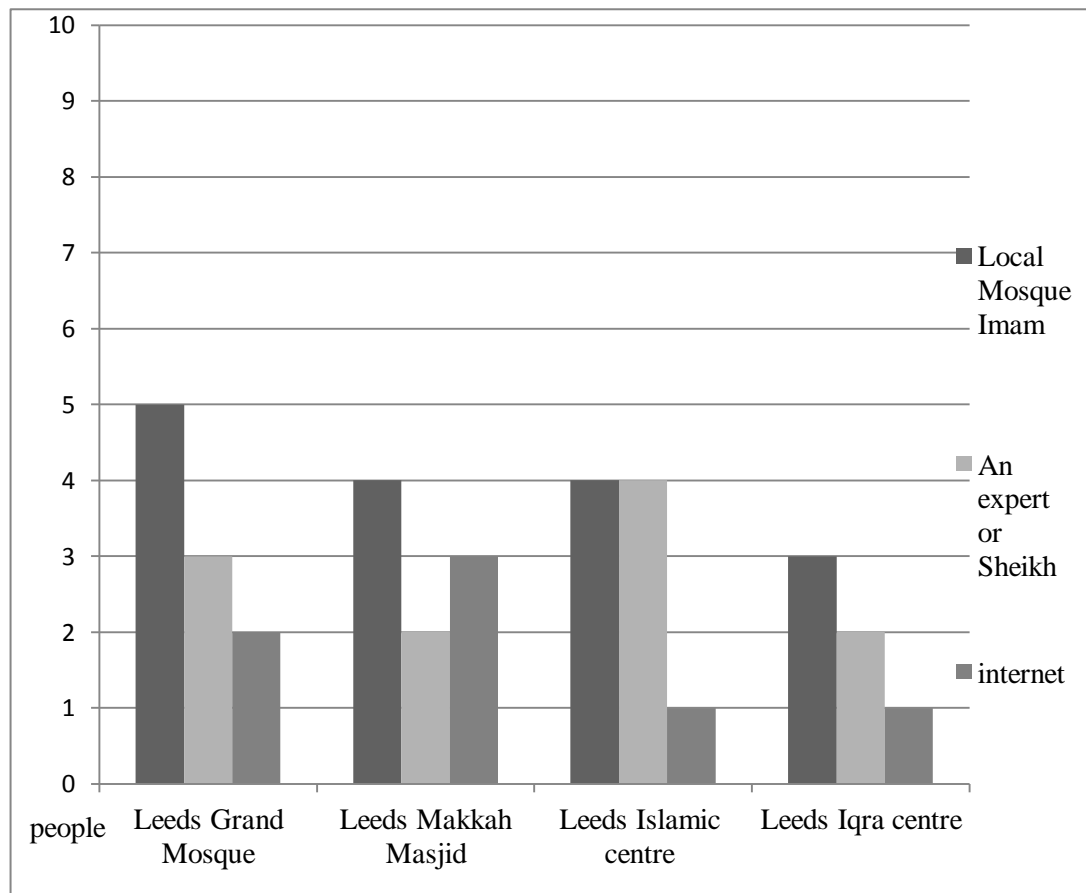
original analyses, it is the inference and extraction of a new ruling regarding a specific legal question that has never been stipulated by previous *'ulama*.
 3) The necessity for collective *ijtihad*, *ijtihad jamai* (cited in Ramadan, 1999: 96-7).

In fact, “collective *ijtihad*” is not a new term in Islamic thought. Rather, it is identical with the notion of *ijma* or consensus, one of the fundamental principles of Islamic legislation. Furthermore, it was the method of the companions of the Prophet that when they could not find any proof about an issue in the Qur’an and the Sunna, they used to come together and express opinions, and come to a collective decision. According to M. Q. Zaman (2006: 170), this establishment (the ECFR) is “old consensus in a new garb, (the West).” However, the proliferation of *mujtahids* and poor guidance among the Muslim community might have compelled al-Qaradawi to re-emphasise this notion. He may also have defined the term *ijtihad* in its contemporary context or necessity. I shall discuss this notion in more detail in Chapter 7. While the above developments are ongoing, in the life of Muslims in Europe traditional religious authority still has a crucial importance, as we shall see in the following section.

6.2. The patterns of religious authority in Leeds:

The following chart (Table 2) illustrates the preferences among a small sample of ordinary Muslim informants from the selected mosques in Leeds in seeking religious authority.

Table 2: Sources of religious authority for Sunni Muslims in Leeds as a response to an interview question: Who/what do you consult when you come across any problem regarding faith and practice?



It is clear from the above chart that the accessibility of religious authority in person is the more preferable option for these Muslims, and that mainly local mosque imams are consulted on any matter regarding religious belief and practices. In second place come the *sheikh* or *mufti*; it must be borne in mind here that the expert *sheikh* and *mufti* are not available all the time like mosque imams. In addition, the internet also has importance for these Muslims as a religious resource in seeking solutions to their

religious problems.⁶⁶ I shall now unpack in turn each of these three sources of religious authority for Sunni Muslims in Leeds, beginning with the mosque imams.

6.2.1 Mosque imams:

In Islam, the first *masjid* imam was the Prophet Muhammad, and then, since Islam had spread into a wider geographical area, it was the companions who had gained their religious education directly from the Prophet, and later on the body of *ulama* with its various components who succeeded him in this role. The term imam, as the most prominent term associated with the *'ulama*, has been used for both religious and political leadership in Islam since its establishment.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, today the meaning of imam in Sunni Islam is generally restricted to prayer leadership at mosques. Some synonyms are *sheikh* in the Arab world, “*mulla, mawla, Mawlana, maulvi, khari [qari], and munshi*” (Barton, 1986: 112) in the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan; and *hoca* or *imam-hatip* in Turkey and the Balkans. While imams are mainly associated with leading prayers (*namaz* or *salat*) and delivering the *khutba* (sermon), knowledge of the Qur’anic sciences (*tafseer, qira’at, hadith, fiqh, usul* (methodology) and other relevant subjects may differ from one imam to another. As a successor to the Prophet Muhammad, an imam represents such a position as best he can in terms of knowledge and behaviour.

The role of imams in British mosques can be summarised thus: they lead the congregational prayers - including the five daily, Friday, two *'eid* prayers (*al-fitr* and

⁶⁶ The number of participants is at each mosque, LGM 11; LMM 9; LIC 10; and IC 9, respectively. The numbers do not appear on the table, one from LGM; one from LIC; and three from the IC refer to those who do not consult any of the above options, but make own research from the sources.

⁶⁷ For the historical usage of this term, see Madelung (1987).

al-adha), and *tarawih* during Ramadan; in addition, they deliver the *jum'ah* and *'eid khutbah* (Friday and festive sermons). They also conduct other religious services such as *nikah* (marriage contract) and *janazah* (funeral), and provide mentoring in divorce and family matters, or any other social problems. They are also involved in teaching activities, whether in a *madrasa* attached to the mosque as a supplementary school or within the mosque itself, not only for children but also adults, as well as preaching and religious guidance activities outside the mosque in hospitals, schools, and prisons. As elsewhere in the Muslim world, imams in Britain accompany congregations on *hajj* (pilgrimage) and provide guidance while pilgrims perform this religious obligation. In addition, imams take part in community events such as seminars and deliver speeches accordingly (see Barton, 1986: 112-6; Lewis, 1994: 114 and 1996). In religious life, belief and practices, the imam has a key role as 'religious authority' at the local level and exercises great influence on the congregation. In what follows, I introduce the imams of the four selected mosques in Leeds.

Firstly, Imam Qari Asim, as a British citizen with Pakistani ethnicity who has been in the UK over 15 years, serves as the main imam of the LMM. Aged 34, Imam Asim is a solicitor by profession, but he succeeds to the role of his late father. The imam is a *hafiz*, who has memorised the whole Qur'an by heart, and he describes himself as a 'Sufi-Barelvi' Muslim. Not only is he very active in the mosque itself in organising various events and programmes, as well as appearing on satellite television giving speeches (the Ummah Channel), but he also involves himself in interfaith dialogue events with the wider society. He has a good command of English, and while the Barelwi *'ulama* appear on the *Ummah* channel using the medium of Urdu, Imam

Asim is exceptional in using English, with the result that one viewer phoned the channel to congratulate the imam (Ummah Channel, 23 April 2010).

Imam Asim is also a member of the executive board of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (MINAB),⁶⁸ an umbrella organisation established in 2006. Recently, he has been awarded the MBE honour, for his local and national level activities,⁶⁹ since, for example, according to one of the national broadcasting news channels:

After the 7/7 terrorist atrocities, he was the first Imam to hold an open day at his Mosque to engage the community on preventing extremism and Islamophobia, despite a lot of opposition by many people in his community to this initiative.⁷⁰

With the above characteristics, Imam Asim projects an exceptional image when we consider the general roles of Britain's mosque imams, especially those who originated from the Indian subcontinent. The statement of a young British-born Muslim from the congregation, Shabsat (a 25-year-old), who lived in Bristol and Birmingham before coming to Leeds, confirms that:

Many communities have imams who do not speak in English and whom many youngsters cannot understand, but in Leeds Makkah Masjid, *alhamdulillah* [praise be to Allah], the imam speaks Arabic, Urdu, English;

⁶⁸ The MINAB is an advisory and facilitator body providing services to mosques and Islamic training institutions in the UK. See more at www.minab.org.uk

⁶⁹ <http://www.makkahmasjid.co.uk/wp/index.php/2012/06/16/imam-qari-asim-awarded-mbe-by-the-queen/> (Accessed on 20 June 2012)

⁷⁰ <http://www.itv.com/news/calendar/2012-06-16/queens-birthday-honours/> (Accessed on 20 June 2012)

he is in touch with the Muslim community, he is in touch with the local community, and wider society (interviewed on 10 February 2011).

Imam Asim combines both religious and community leadership. In terms of religion, within the LMM's congregation, he is seen as a religious authority for religious belief and practices. On any occasion, if Muslims have trouble in any matter as regards their religion, they firstly go to the imam. If they consult any other sources such as primary books of the religion, and the internet, they need to hear confirmation or further explanation from the imam. Thus, the imam becomes the nerve centre for religious authority for the congregation. Imam Asim reflects that from an insider's perspective:

Asking local imams is a good thing, since at the end of the day even if they consulted everyone else [more expert scholars] they [will] still consult the local imams because they do not know when asking others whether the answer they are given [will] actually fit in with how they practice the rest of the things [whether they practice whatever they say or not] (27 March 2011).

It can be concluded from the above statement that the rapport between ordinary Muslims and the local mosque imam, in terms of knowing each other, is an important factor for the efficiency of *fatwa*. On the one hand, while the imam who gives a *fatwa* considers the ordinary Muslim's situation (e.g. age, education, religiosity), the ordinary Muslim, on the other hand, feels comfortable when taking advice from the local imam since he knows about the imam. Therefore, the reliability of 'everyone else' becomes an issue here as regards to how the religious expert actually practices

his own daily life. For example, if a *mufti* advises an ordinary Muslim not to take bank interest but takes it himself, the ordinary Muslim does not rely on the *mufti*'s ruling.

If people find difficulty in accessing the imam in person, there is a link on the mosque website enabling Muslims to contact him, asking questions either by completing an enquiry form or by telephoning him. In the absence of Imam Asim, his younger brother, Qari Qasim, a teacher in the supplementary school of LMM, leads the prayers in the mosque.

During my interview with him, I asked Imam Asim: "In what matters do other Muslims consult you to get a *fatwa*?" According to him, requests mainly concern faith and practice, then family, and then social and financial matters.

Faith and practice is mainly in the mosque about prayer, the main issues are about how to pray. People generally ask questions about performing the rituals. For example, if someone is late and misses one or two *rak'ah* [parts] from the *fard* [obligatory] prayer, what is it that the person needs to do? Whereas people who are not regular attendees in this mosque ask generally about faith matters such as *shafaat u awliyaullah* [intercession of the friends of Allah, a common belief among Sufi-Barelwi followers (see Lewis, 1994: 83; Geaves, 1996: 95)].

It is significant that someone may ask questions about the above Barelwi belief and get first hand information from the imam. It also reflects a dialogue involvement between a non-Barelwi Muslim and a Barelwi imam. In the context of Britain, some questions about social and financial issues also arise: 'Can we sit at the same table

while people are drinking alcohol?’ or ‘Is someone’s income purely *halal* if he is a taxi driver and carries drunken people or has a shop and sells alcohol?’ Imam Asim said that he had encouraged people (who asked these questions about *halal* income) to spend their profits (after their living expenses) either by going on the *hajj* (pilgrimage) or giving *sadaqa* (charity). He also reports that when he issues *fatawa*, he benefits from consulting the *Fatawa Ridawiyya* or *Rizviyya* (30 volumes) written by Ahmad Rida Barelwi (d.1921).

Turning to Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM), Sheikh Muhammad Taher is originally from Libya but is a British citizen who has been in the UK for about 14 years. The Sheikh (aged 42) is the only imam in LGM, and is reputed to recite the Holy Qur’an so beautifully that this is a key factor for many international students at the university in selecting which mosque to attend. He describes himself as a *sheikh* or scholar and refers to his being an imam “as an employee position in the mosque”. He is also a PhD candidate in Islamic law at the University of Leeds. He memorised the Holy Qur’an by heart in his childhood and gained a classical religious education by completing studies in the Shari‘a law faculty in his home country. He is bilingual, but uses mainly Arabic inside the mosque, and occasionally explains some matters (mistakes in religious practices, such as ablution and prayer) in English during the second part of his sermons. However, he gives talks and seminars using the medium of English, especially in the study circles held for the benefit of newly converted Muslims, which take place in the Cardigan Centre, LS6. He also teaches *tajweed* (reciting the holy book properly) to adults and children on Friday evenings. Unlike Imam Asim, he is not actively involved in interfaith activities as there is another person, Dr. Hasan al-Katib, who is in charge of that activity on the mosque

committee.⁷¹ In the absence of Sheikh Muhammad, Sheikh al-Judai and Dr. Hasan lead *jum'ah* prayers and deliver sermons.

In addition to his main duty, leading prayer and delivering sermons on Friday, Sheikh Muhammad is available at 6pm-7pm from Monday to Friday, to answer any question related to religious advice or *fatawa* on the telephone, or via an online query form. This is the case if he is not asked face to face after the congregational prayers, the traditional practice of Muslims being to ask such questions after the prayer. The existence of a renowned Muslim scholar at the LGM, Sheikh Abdullah al-Judai, makes Sheikh Muhammad's job easier, because the former is more engaged with giving *fatawa* and current issues about the religion, as the official *mufti* of the LGM. In asking for a *fatwa*, people tend to go to first Sheikh al-Judai, and then to Sheikh Muhammad in the absence of the former. Sheikh Muhammad explains that "*fatwa* is a big thing, and I am not giving a *fatwa*, I am trying to answer [basic] questions and find solutions". Hamid, a 28-year-old PhD student from Jordan, states:

when I had some problems about religious beliefs and practices, especially different implementations like prayer timetables, I went to the Grand Mosque and found answers to my questions. I think Sheikh Muhammad is very knowledgeable as a scholar (3 February 2011).

Sheikh Muhammad reports that he is consulted mainly in terms of beliefs and practices, and also family matters. He maintains:

⁷¹ At the time of writing, a new committee of the mosque has appointed Dr. Zunaid Karim for this role. See <http://www.leedsgrandmosque.com/mosque/staff.asp> (Accessed on 20 June 2012)

Regarding beliefs and practices, people ask questions about mistakes in *salat*, and some misunderstandings about religious rituals. For example, a brother asked me about joining two prayers [*duhr* and *‘asr*] during winter. Another one asked me about different *madhahib* in *fiqh* [Hanafiyya, Shafi‘iyya, Malikiyya, and Hanbaliyya] when he noticed different implementations in the mosque (31 May 2011).

Sheikh Muhammad informed me that in such situations he is not giving a *fatwa*, but rather interpreting the situation within the limits of his knowledge. He further says that to issue a *fatwa* is a significant matter appropriate to someone of Sheikh al-Judai’s standing. In the context of Britain, according to Sheikh Muhammad, it is for someone with his learning to determine and publish new authoritative *fatwas* to fill the gap in minority *fiqh*.

At the Iqra Centre (IC), Imam Ershad is originally from Pakistan and holds British citizenship. The imam is 42 years old, and has lived in Britain for the last 12 years. He is a *hafiz*, as are the other imams mentioned above, having memorised the Qur’an at an early age in his life. He gained his religious education in Pakistan and came to the UK to serve the United Kingdom Islamic Mission (UKIM) as an imam or teacher in its centres across the UK. He has completed his Master’s degree in Islamic studies at Birmingham University, and was then appointed as the imam of the Moortown-based IC.

Imam Ershad is the only imam in the IC leading prayers and delivering sermons. He is a unique imam amongst the Sunni Muslim mosques in Leeds in terms of using English in the *jum‘ah khutbah* (Friday sermon). Apart from reciting some verses

from the Holy Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic, the imam uses only English in delivering his sermons. When I asked him about that, he replied:

It should be [so] in every mosque. We live here in Britain, and sometimes, the young generation does not understand what the sermons are about, and even we have here Muslims from different ethnic backgrounds. Hence, we should use English to deliver our sermons and preachings so as to enable the message of *khutba* to be understood (22 April 2012).

Imam Ershad is also one of the teachers at the IC's supplementary school during weekdays after formal school hours and at weekends. He teaches the basic Arabic alphabet to children so that they can read the Qur'an and pray. He also teaches basic Islamic knowledge, the principles of faith and the pillars of Islam. For adults, he gives *tajweed* courses and *tafseer* classes. As with the other imams mentioned above, Imam Ershad is the first point for consulting on religious practices and social problems, mainly concerning family matters. As in the case of LGM, the IC has someone dealing with inter-faith activities. Thus, Imam Ershad devotes himself to the main functions of an imam at the mosque.

Imam Ershad informed me that questions he is asked generally concern faith and practice, as well as family matters. For instance, he says:

a day before someone asked me about the women, is it permissible to use make-up things, or cut their hair? Why should a woman be obedient to her husband, what is the religious aspect of that? People also ask relevant questions about living in a modern age. For example, can a woman pray while she has worn make-up, and put on perfume? ...In social life, can

Muslims give *salam* [greetings] to non-Muslims, or how should Muslims deal with them, to the extent that they have to mix with them?

Imam Ershad encourages the congregation to integrate into British society, and that is clearly visible in his usage of the medium of English in Friday sermons and speeches. He says “I am not giving a *fatwa*, just expressing my opinions about the questions.” Regarding social life, he thinks “representation of Islam in Britain is very weak and Muslims need to act.” According to Imam Ershad, living in this country is a great opportunity to present Islam to non-Muslims, and the aim to establish UKIM is a move in that direction as a “*da’wa* enterprise” (McLoughlin, 2005b: 62).

Fourthly, Mawlana Yousef is a British-born young man and the ex-imam of Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC) in Chapeltown. It should be noted here that I was hoping to discuss here the current imams of LIC. However, they were so reluctant to participate in this research that I decided to focus on the ex-imam of LIC, Mawlana Yousef. He gained his traditional religious education in a nearby Deobandi seminar, the very well-known *dar al-‘ulum* of Dewsbury. Mawlana Yousef is 24 years old, and from a middle class family who migrated from Pakistan to England in the 1960s. He was selected for the *dar al-‘ulum* in Dewsbury after a long process of examination, and he completed the famous 18th-century Indian syllabus, the “*dars-i nizami*” (Lewis, 1994: 135-6; Geaves, 1996: 148), eventually finding himself as imam in the largest Deobandi-Tablighi Jama’at *masjid* in Leeds. During that time, he gained two Master’s degrees, one in Healthcare and the other in Islamic sciences and Arabic literature, from Leeds University.

Unlike the other three imams introduced above, Mawlana Yousef confidently describes himself as an *'alim* (a scholar). However, despite his training, he is still currently one of the senior teachers in the supplementary school of LIC. He occasionally teaches Islamic RE classes in local schools in Harehills by appointment from the local authorities. Mawlana Yousef is very busy in terms of teaching and playing a role as a religious expert. For instance, once (on Thursday, 30 March 2011) I found a chance to visit the Dewsbury Dar al-ulum with him. During the car journey from Leeds to Dewsbury, he answered many questions from the other three people travelling to the *bay'an* (conference) with us. They mainly communicated in Urdu, but Mawlana Yousef later on explained to me some of the contents of the questions, such as Barelwi beliefs in visiting cemeteries of saints (*maqbara-e pir*), and daily religious rites generally. According to Mawlana Yousef,

in the eyes of ordinary Muslims, graduates from religious seminars (*dar al-ulum*s) have a deep knowledge in religion and have the tools to interpret the current situation in Britain.

It is also worth mentioning briefly the role played by the formal imams of the Islamic centre. The two imams in turn lead the prayers and give the *khutbah* on Friday prayers. In addition, Mawlana Omar generally gives *tafseer* classes in Urdu at the weekends after the noon (*duhr*) prayers. According to my observation, the imams in the centre do not give any Qur'an classes to ordinary people, while some elders help people who want to correct their readings of the Qur'an. However, the imams involve themselves in teaching in supplementary schools, just like Mawlana Yousef.

To summarise, while not always being the most qualified, because of their involvement in the daily life of mosques and their congregations, imams in Leeds are at the very centre of the exercise of everyday religious authority. The imams partly meet the expectation of the first and second generation of British-born Muslims that their imams should lecture and teach in English and, unlike imams in some Muslim countries, depending on their attributes, they sometimes take on more social roles within the society (Birt and Lewis, 2010: 101). Interfaith, youth, and social work services are sometimes carried out by people who are not imams, although it is true, too, that some imams in the UK are beginning to couple their religious studies with professional training oriented to chaplaincy and other areas of public ministry as an imam. Nonetheless, overall, various conditions including the rapid growth of a very youthful community, issues around proficiency in English, modern methods (Lewis, 1994: 122) and the willingness of mosque committees to employ well-qualified British imams who are paid accordingly (McLoughlin, 2005c), together with socio-economic factors (Barton, 1986: 112) and the overall social capital of some segments of the community should be considered as other reasons why the influence of mosque imams has been somewhat circumscribed in the British context (see Birt, 2006).

As individuals with particular skills and abilities, Leeds's mosque imams fulfil different roles. Imam Ershad's full English sermons and teaching are very influential in delivering the message to young and multicultural British communities, but his mosque serves a more middle class constituency in the suburb of Moortown. Sheikh Muhammad not only serves an ethnically mixed migrant and international student community but also converts Muslims with his traditional style of delivering the

sermons and his appealing standard of Qur'an recitation. Mawlana Yousef focuses more on children's education at the mosque supplementary school. However, Imam Qari Asim combines religious functions with those of a community leader, and uses mixed languages (Urdu and English) for his sermons and speeches. His engagement with the various segments of local society (youth, and non-Muslims) has rewarded him with the MBE.

Overall, the imams introduced above as being the nerve point of religious authority, provide religious guidance with regard to religious beliefs and practices in the context of Britain. The easy access to and availability of the imams at least five times a day make it the first preference of ordinary Muslims to consult the imams. Thus, Leeds's imams have become a crucial factor in directing the socio-religious life of Muslims in the city.

6.2.2. Religious experts:

Besides the imams, religious experts also play an important role as religious authorities for Sunni Muslims in Leeds. Now I propose to illustrate the influence of two famous Muslim scholars, Sheikh Abdullah al-Judai and Sheikh Abdurrahman. The former is official *mufti* of the LGM, where he gives a *tafseer* (Qur'anic exegesis) class weekly, while the latter is based in the LIC, where he speaks in seminars or conferences. Not only do they both seem to exercise great religious authority over Muslims and their imams in different ethnic and cultural circles in different mosques, but they are also well-known and influential figures at a national level. In this section, my purpose is to introduce these two scholars, offer a case study of how each deals with a particular topic, and then to investigate their religious authority within

the Sunni Muslim community in Leeds. Despite my several attempts to interview these scholars, it did not happen because of their busy diary. Instead, I reflect here on my observation during their speeches and talks.

Sheikh al-Judai (b.1959) is one of the founding members of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR), having served as its general secretary from 1998-2000, and now as its deputy leader.⁷² He is originally from Iraq where he studied a traditional Islamic education and received his *ijazah*⁷³ from the leading scholars of al-Basra, the southern province of Iraq. He specialised in the *hadith* studies and has published several books. He took up some teaching positions in Middle Eastern countries such as Iraq and Kuwait, and then in 1993 moved to the UK (for reasons not known to me), where he has maintained his research and teaching.⁷⁴ He has a PhD degree in Islamic Economics from the University of Wales. He is also a member of the European Institute of Human Sciences in Paris. In Leeds, he is the director of the Islamic Research Centre,⁷⁵ leading studies on *hadith* and other Islamic sciences. At the local level, he thus serves as consultant in *Islamic fiqh* for the LGM. More broadly, as one of the influential members of the ECFR, he has issued a number of *fatawa* about religious belief and practices in the context of Britain. For example, to recall a topic from Chapter 4, joining *'isha* (late evening) prayer to the *maghrib* (sunset) one in the summer season is only one of his well-known *fatawa* about religious practices.

⁷² <http://www.e-cfr.org/ar/index.php?ArticleID=245> (Accessed on 18 June 2012)

⁷³ A certificate given in the traditional Islamic education proves the holder's qualification to transmit the knowledge of the tutors, or the subject to the next generation. See more details in Akpinar, Cemil, 'Ijazet', in Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi (Turkey's Religious Endowment, Encyclopaedia of Islam) (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 2000)

⁷⁴ See his own autobiographical notes (in Arabic) <http://muntada.islamtoday.net/t37387.html> (Accessed on 23 November 2011)

⁷⁵ Al Judai Research & Consultations, 1A The Crescent, Adel, Leeds. LS16 6AA.

After giving this very brief biography about Sheikh al-Judai, it is useful to reflect on his role at the LGM on the basis of my observations there. Every Monday evening after *'isha* prayer, he gives lectures called *halaqatu't-tafseer* or Qur'anic exegesis circle. General attendance at the class is about 25-30 people, varying from university students to the regular attendees in the mosque, and some elites including academics, doctors, university staff, and businessmen. He gives his talk in Arabic, mainly commencing with recitation of a passage from the Qur'an or the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. This exposition takes at least one hour. Then the Sheikh moves into a question-and-answer section in which he is asked about current issues related to the topic. Sometimes, the Sheikh does not deliver a speech, but just replies directly to the questions raised by the audience. Finally, he finishes the session with a supplication prayer. At this point, I am going to demonstrate a *fatwa* issued by al-Judai in the context of Britain that has had influence mainly upon the practice of the LGM's congregation, and some other Sunni Muslims such as university students and some Muslims in the IC, which shares a reformist sensibility with LGM despite its Pakistani heritage.

In 1995, al-Judai gave a *fatwa* about the permissibility of joining two of the five compulsory daily prayers. He explained that in the British context *ish'a* prayer is delayed nearly until midnight during summer time:

It is true that Islam strongly encourages that the prayer be performed on time and the basic rule is that the rulings for the times of the prayers have been made clear and that through these rulings the time of each prayer can be known by certain signs. The time of Eisha for example does not begin until the red twilight disappears from the sky. And so, according to Islamic

law if the red twilight doesn't disappear until twelve o'clock at night then the time of Eisha doesn't start until that time (capitals and transliteration in original).

However, there are only 2-3 hours between *ish'a* and *fajr* (dawn of next day) prayers, so this constitutes a hardship for Muslims in Britain. If people wait until midnight to pray, there will be a major risk of missing the dawn prayer simply because people do not wake from their sleep a few hours later. For people who go to work in the early hours, it is especially difficult for them to adjust their rest time sufficiently. Thus, the sheikh suggests joining two prayers in this context. He cites examples from the life of Prophet Muhammad showing in what circumstances the Prophet combined the two prayers. Indeed, even without any reason, the Prophet sometimes joined two prayers at the same time while he was in Madina to make matters easier for his *ummah* or community. As a result, the sheikh claims that:

Joining two prayers because of need is acceptable and permitted and this is the most correct position of the scholars and it is what the provision of concessions within the religion dictates - the joining of either of the two prayers with the other at either of the two times, for example joining Maghrib with Eisha at the time of Eisha or joining Eisha with Maghrib at the time of Maghrib (capitals and transliteration in original).⁷⁶

Considering the Muslim Diaspora and the need for a minority *fiqh*, this *fatwa* is important since al-Judai attempts to find a solution for a Muslim community living in

⁷⁶ This *fatwa* was initially found published on the notice board in Leeds Grand Mosque in 2009. Since then an electronic copy has been posted on the website of the mosque. See <http://www.leedsgrandmosque.com/services/fatwa-eisha.asp> (Accessed on 11 October 2010)

particular circumstances. Combining two prayers makes daily life easier while adhering to the law. Among university students attending LGM, most of those to whom I spoke (mainly Hanafis) said that they were also combining *dhuhr* and *asr* when exams coincide with prayer times. If they do not combine two prayers, one of the prayers will be missed. Mukarram, a 37-year-old self employed and regular attendee at the IC, says, “Yes, combining two prayers is unusual but is a *sunnah* of the Prophet, whose implementation is well-known”. Furthermore, he maintains that in the British context, time shortage is really difficult and people suffer from that: “Muslim communities in Leeds might have different understanding about that, but in this *masjid* (the IC) we prayed by combining two prayers. It is [something that produces] easiness for us.” Another ordinary Muslim from a Sufi-Barelwi background, Jaweed (a 21-year-old university student), states: “If you know what you are doing, there is no problem. Several occasions, I combined or joined.”

Consequently, most Sunnis at LGM and some Muslims represented above outside this mosque agree that it is better to join two prayers than to miss one of them as far as the British context is concerned. Nothing is against the main principles of Islamic belief and practices; rather it is a form of easiness and flexibility for Muslims living in the UK. Thereby, the LGM flexibly applies this *fatwa* regarding joining *dhuhr* and *asr* prayers during winter time, and *maghrib* and *isha* prayers during summer time. The fact that the mosque actually organises its prayer times thus illustrates that al-Judai is an important religious authority for the LGM’s congregation, helping them to interpret the sources according to its own circumstances.

Another famous Muslim scholar in Britain is Sheikh Abdurrahman, originally from Pakistan. Sheikh Abdurrahman, based in the Bury Dar al-ulum, is one example of a

pioneering scholar amongst the Deobandis in Britain. Although he has a website,⁷⁷ and commonly appears in the media (‘www.halaldawarecords.com’ and ‘Hanafi fiqh Channel’), there is hardly any biographical information about him in the public realm. He is currently a senior lecturer of *Hadith* at Dar-al Ulum in Bury.

The sheikh travels throughout the UK giving lectures and seminars on current issues that challenge Muslims today. He has given both written and audio-video responses to a number of questions, from the status of women to the place of *tawassul* (supplicating Allah through an intermediary), and sometimes his speeches can be listened to live on the internet. I shall now discuss one of his speeches on a topic closely related to the issue of religious authority, “following a particular *madhab*, school of law” in the contemporary world at a time when *taqlid* (imitation, following a *madhab*) has been challenged by some reformers.

In LIC, as I mentioned in Chapter 4, there are occasionally seminars and public lectures given by the Deobandi *‘ulama*. On 12 December 2010, there was a seminar entitled “*The legacy of Imam Abu Hanifa and following a particular madhab*” delivered by two important Deobandi *‘ulama*. Both scholars mainly focused on why Muslims should follow a school of law, particularly the *Hanafiyya* which predominates in South Asia. The first speaker emphasised the legacy and method of Imam Abu Hanifa. The second speaker was Sheikh Abdurrahman, who explained the necessity of following a particular *madhab* for lay people. He started by greeting the audience in Urdu, then moved into English, summarising what the main theme was in his speech:

⁷⁷ The name of website is not given here for anonymization purposes.

Why is it important or essential to follow a *madhab*? I will try to explain that to you by using three reasons: because following a *madhab* is easier, it is safer, and billions of people who have followed a school of law since the second century of the Islamic calendar cannot be wrong.

The Sheikh gave some brief background on the Qur'an and sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, then emphasised the place of Imam Abu Hanifa in terms of introducing the methodology of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), saying that:

When Imam Abu Hanifa saw that people were interpreting things differently, he developed *usul al-fiqh*, in a methodology stating that if something comes from the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, they are upon my *ra's* and *ayn*;⁷⁸ and if there is nothing in the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, look at the usage of companions, *ijma* (consensus); and if not there, use *qiyas* (analogy). So these are the rules taken out [through] *masail* (topics) from the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*. Today many *masail* are not in the *Qur'an* and the *Hadith*, so we have to use analogy to derive rules from the sources. For example, drugs are not mentioned in the *Qur'an*, or the *Hadith*, but they, just like alcohol, intoxicate human consciousness, so it is *haram* [forbidden] when we make analogy. As a result you do not need to do research, leave it to the *ulama* since it is easier for you. Otherwise, you must memorise the Qur'an, and the *Hadith*, know Arabic very well, have deep knowledge in methodology (*usul*)... it is easier for you to follow a school of law. It is also safer, because we do not have *ikhlas* (sincerity) and *taqwa* (piety) like the first three generations had. That is why it is safer for us to follow a

⁷⁸ Literally 'head' and 'eye', an idiom in Arabic which means 'very acceptable'.

madhab...so you should trust the *ulama* that deal with the *masail*, and follow whatever they update in *fiqh* according to day and age.

As we mentioned in the first section of this chapter, the formative period of Islamic law resulted in four schools of law which Muslims from different parts of the world follow. The sheikh points out that it was the early legal jurists' piety and sincerity that motivated them to work for the benefit of the Muslim community without the assistance of any state mechanism (see Hallaq, 2005: 204). Furthermore, the sheikh quoted a verse from the Qur'an (Chapter 4, An-Nisa, verse 59) that says, "Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority", and he interpreted the last element of this verse, referring to "those of you who are in authority" as '*ulama*, not political rulers.⁷⁹ According to the sheikh, the four imams and their pupils made research upon research, and established schools of law. Then he re-emphasised the safety of following the '*ulama* before moving into a question-and-answer session:

Today, people must be confident in the *ulama* that have done research for the Muslim community. It is safer for you to follow because you will be asked in the day of judgement: did you have ability to research from the *Qur'an* and the *Sunna*, or did you do research out of your own intention and for your own benefit, especially in this era. I do not trust myself because I do not have *ikhlas* and *taqwa*, so I am following a *madhab*, and Muslims should trust their *ulama* and follow a school of law.

⁷⁹ However, in Islamic resources, for example in *al-Mufradat fi Garib al-Qur'an* by al-Ragib al-Isfahani, the last part of this verse is interpreted as three groups: the governors (*wulat*), the scholars (*hukama*), and the preachers (*waaza*). See al-Isfahani, (*al-Mufradat fi Garib al-Qur'an*), Dar al-Ma'refah, Beirut: h.506, p.25.

The sheikh maintained his emphasis on the importance of following a school of law, regardless of whether it is Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, or Hanbali. Otherwise, the believers may interpret sources based on their own logic and for their own benefit. Consequently, lay interpreters can destroy a religious life that is surrounded by secular and material values.

The presenter then asked the audience to raise questions by writing them down on a piece of paper and passing them to him so that the sheikh could give answers to them. The sheikh initially read some questions⁸⁰ raised by the audience, and he referred to his website in which he had already replied to similar questions in detail, so as not to waste time. The sheikh then read out another question, which I had asked, namely whether it was "lawful or permissible to transit from one *madhab* to another, for example, in the act of combining two prayers?" He answered as follows:

Yes, if you have *ikhlas*, *taqwa*, and if necessary, you can do that, but you must have knowledge about both schools of law...for instance, in the India-Pakistan partition in 1947, many husbands disappeared. According to *Hanafiyya*, a wife must wait for her husband till such time as he reaches the age of 90, to marry somebody else or distribute his property. For instance, if a man disappeared when he was 70, the wife must wait 20 years for that to happen. The *ulama* gathered and decided to use the *fatwa* of Imam *Malik* that a wife has to wait for 4 years. After this period, she can distribute his estate and can marry another person. Because of the extreme necessity, the *ulama* agreed on that *fatwa*.

⁸⁰ Such as, "Can you give me proofs about congregational prayer after salat?" Is it *bid'ah* to say *salam alayke ya rasulallah*?" "Should we celebrate *mawlid*?"

The sheikh discussed this matter further and said, “You can completely change your *madhab* from one to another”, and he gave some examples of Ibn Abidin and Tahawi, who changed their *madhab* from *Shafi‘iyya* into *Hanafiyya*. However, he had the attention of the audience when he warned that “If you take something from one *madhab*, one from another, and one from others, you will invalidate your prayers”. He explained this through a scenario in which, if somebody follows the Hanafi school of law, and his wife follows the Shafi‘i, (in the former school, bleeding from any part of the body breaks *wudu’* or ablution, but for the latter it does not) and if this person intermittently changes his *madhab* from one to another, he invalidates his prayers. Touching women breaks *wudu’* for a man according to the Shafi‘i, but for the Hanafi it does not. Take the case of a person who comes home and kisses his wife and says, “Oh, my *wudu’* is not broken according to *Hanafiyya*”, and then he notices that his finger is bleeding for some reason, and he says, “Oh, my *wudu’* is not broken according to *Shafi‘iyya*”. In both situations, his prayer is not valid because his *wudu’* is broken. “As a result, you cannot pick and choose on the basis of your own *‘aql* or logic, for the *‘ulama* have to decide this, not you as a lay person,” states the sheikh at the end of his explanation.

It is worthwhile mentioning here that he advised the audience to read a book called ‘Bahishti Zewar’ or ‘Heavenly Ornaments’,⁸¹ when he was asked “*Should the public read some books about the authenticity of ahadith [plural of hadith]?*” The sheikh emphasised the importance of the *‘ulama* as a traditional religious authority for ordinary Muslims in what follows:

⁸¹ A comprehensive handbook of fiqh, especially for the education of girls and women, written by Ashraf Ali Thanwi (d.1943), see full translation of this book: *Bahishti Zewar* (Heavenly Ornaments), trans. by Maulana Muhammad Mahomed, Third Authorized Edition (South Africa: Zam Zam Publishers, 2007).

As with other worldly matters, leave these issues to the scholars of Islam. For example, if you are ill, you will go to a doctor, or if your car is broken, you will go to a mechanic. Similarly, if you have a problem in understanding a *mas'ala* [topic or matter] go to a qualified scholar and ask. If you take a strong medicine without consulting a doctor, you may kill yourself. For the religion, it is the same, and you may put your faith in danger by dealing with any religious matter in which you do not have enough proficiency.

As the sheikh pointed out above, there is a tendency among reformist Muslims, especially those who advocated returning to faith and practices of the first three-generation Muslims, to look at a book and give an opinion about religious problems, but to attempt this should entail certain proficiency and deep knowledge. I will discuss these issues of *ijtihad* (using individual effort in interpretation) and *taqlid* (following a madhab) in more detail in the next chapter. The sheikh's general advice to Muslims conforms to the typical teaching of the Deobandi tradition (Metcalf, 1982) which emerged in the second half of the 19th century in India, and aimed at recovering the *'ulama*'s role within the society in the face of modernity and modernist critiques. For ordinary people, as we have seen, to follow a school of law, and especially the Hanafi *madhab*, is encouraged for their own benefit so as not to invalidate their religious practices in the complex contexts of contemporary life. To deal with the religious issues and find necessary solutions (*ijtihad*) is the job of religious experts, according to the sheikh.

In summary, both Sheikh al-Judai and Sheikh Abdurrahman deal with the current issues regarding religious belief and practices. The influence of Sheikh al-Judai as a

religious authority can be seen in daily prayers in the LGM in Leeds and more broadly amongst Arab and reformist communities via the ECFR in the UK and Europe. For example, the practice of combining *dhuhr* and *'asr* prayers in winter time and *maghrib* and *'isha* in summer time is implemented according to his *fatwa*. Sheikh Abdurrahman is a senior lecturer at Dar al-Ulum in Bury, as mentioned above. The graduates from the *dar al-'ulum*s generally take imamate positions in the mosques and schools throughout the UK (see more in Birt and Lewis, 2010: 101-6), as in the case of *Mawlana* Yousef, and they disseminate what they have learnt from their tutors. Thus, Sheikh Abdurrahman always encourages ordinary Muslims to trust the *'ulama* in matters of religious belief and practices, which reflects more of a traditionalist position.

6.2.3. The internet:

The internet is being used as a popular research medium by ordinary Muslims and experts alike (Bunt, 2000). Its growing accessibility enables everyone to get information easily. In the life of Muslims, it has a great significance in terms of online *fatawa* and discourses about religious life although, depending on whether the source is personalised or depersonalised, it does not necessarily reproduce the close relationships of personal trust on which an imam's face-to-face advice is typically based.

Interestingly, and reflecting a development of the last decade, all the four mosques featured in this study now have websites that enable communication with their congregations by announcing important events, prayer timetables, and so on. Additionally, these websites exhibit *fatawa* in a specific section or in the form of

frequently asked questions (FAQs), as well as providing links to other *fatwa* websites. This facility enables Muslims, both men and women, to ask questions varying from sexual relations and marriage to women's menstruation, and so on. Indeed, a more depersonalised source of advice on certain topics can sometimes be welcome.

Table 2 suggests that some Muslims seek *fatawa* and resolutions through the internet. In '*iMuslims*' Bunt claims that "the extension of Internet-technology access is opening up new markets for specific forms of religious authority, challenging norms" (2009: 113). However, the internet itself is of course not a source of religious authority, but a medium. In the end, it is from a scholar or *mufti* that web surfers get the *fatawa* they seek. Therefore, according to my informants who seek *fatawa* and religious guidance on the internet, issues such as knowledge pollution and reliable information are extremely important. For example, a young male British-born university student named Fadlullah (a 23-year-old) says, "if you know the website's reliability, then you look at it, otherwise there are lots of websites and information may confuse you, even you go astray" (interviewed on February 2, 2011). Furthermore, another young Muslim named Irshad (27), an estate agent attending the LIC, says that:

I think we should only consult a website which we know about, because people claim themselves as Muslims and give rulings on a website, but they are not. ...If I know a website and the ruling is straightforward, I might not speak to a scholar. But, most of the time I consult a religious expert because, you know, the *fatawa* can differ from people to people depending on their situations (interviewed on 18 April 2011).

Easy access to the internet, especially in Britain, encourages many Muslims to search *fatawa* online. My informants gave several websites' names, such as www.al-huda.com, www.askimam.com, www.Sunnipath.com, www.al-islam.com, and www.islamonline.net. The four mosque websites link to some other websites for further research or more information: for instance, the LGM refers to www.e-cfr.org/en/ (the ECFR); the LMM to www.Sunnipath.com; the LIC to www.central-mosque.com; and the IC to www.ukim.org/dawah/askimam.

6.3. Conclusion:

This chapter has investigated the key roles of *'ulama* – both imams and scholars - as religious authorities amongst the Sunni Muslims in four Leeds mosques. In the absence of any sole state or community-based religious authority for all Muslims in Britain, religious authority has become localised and is affirmed by different segments of the community. According to my findings, mosque imams are the frontline and focal point for Muslims, as they are elsewhere in the Muslim world. Personal familiarity with the imam or sheikh and his knowledge about how *fatawa* might be applicable to a particular Muslim's life are key factors in seeking religious advice and acknowledging religious authority.

Those *'ulama* who have proficiency in Islamic law and related sciences manage the process of updating and promoting authoritative interpretations, as in the case of Sheikh al-Judai, whose *fatwa* on combining two prayers is a crucial attempt to contribute to 'minority *fiqh*' in the context of Britain. As a prototype of reformist *'ulama*, he has important influence among the congregation of LGM. By contrast, as a representative of traditionalist *'ulama*, Sheikh Abdurrahman takes a stand on

advocating that people should follow one of the four *mujtahids* (Imams Abu Hanifa, Malik, Shafi'i, and Hanbali) as a religious authority since they reached the peak of knowledge, piety, and sincerity (*'ilm*, *taqwa*, and *ikhlas*, respectively). The accessibility of *'ulama* through the internet further enables ordinary Muslims to contact famous scholars and ask questions on religious life. Anonymous identity, for example in the form of aliases, offers a kind of confidence and comfort for these ordinary Muslims when asking questions about private and personal matters.

Chapter 7

The meanings and functions of *ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *fatwa* for Sunni Muslims in Leeds

Since the beginnings of modernity in the Muslim world, ordinary Muslims have begun to raise their voices with the aid of the mass communication and education facilities that “protestant Islam” has shaped in the hands of “non-ulama or lay interpreters” (Robinson, 2009: 349). The intersection of emerging public spheres with processes of reform (Salvatore, 2009: 193) has paved the way for individuals to articulate more opinions about religious beliefs and practices. Furthermore, mass immigration to Europe from Muslim lands has compelled Muslim communities in the Diaspora to tackle issues connected with “the secularization, individualization, and privatization” (Cesari, 2003: 260) of religious life in the process of adaptation to the western environment. As Cesari (2005: 4) has pointed out, the individualisation of Islamic practice is accompanied by a growing distrust of religious authority amongst believers, whether of a particular religious leader or an institution. However, Chapter 6 has documented the fact that mosque imams and religious experts remain crucially important as religious authorities for Leeds’s Sunni Muslims. Contrary to Cesari’s claim, I can argue that trust in traditional religious authority remains fairly strong in the city, perhaps because of the predominance of Muslims of South Asian heritage (e.g. the Deobandis and Barelwis) who are generally understood to be more conservative and pious than their Middle Eastern counterparts.

In this chapter, I propose to deal with the interrelated notions of *ijtihad* (independent legal reasoning), *taqlid* (following a school of law), and *fatwa* (legal verdict, opinion). In the process of *ijtihad*, a legal jurist or religious expert (*mujtahid*) makes efforts to derive rulings from the sources of religion or interpret the sources in changing circumstances, and so produce *fatwa*. As a result, ordinary Muslims follow (*taqlid*) the *fatawa* of religious experts in their religious life. In the British context, both ordinary Muslims and scholars are discussing whether following one of the four Islamic schools of law (*taqlid*) is necessary or not. The debate over following a particular *madhab* is very popular. The common *Salafi* rejectionist approach towards *taqlid* (Hamid, 2009: 356) is met with strong opposition from traditionalist South Asian religious groups such as the Deobandis (Usmani, 2006: 66) and Barelwis (Ammar, 2001: 74). The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how *taqlid* is perceived by Sunni Muslims in Leeds. My research unpacks the attitudes of both ordinary Muslims and the *'ulama*, including the mosque imams and religious experts, towards the meaning and functions of *ijtihad*, *taqlid* and *fatwa* in the UK Muslim Diaspora.

7.1. *Ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *fatwa* in Islam:

Literally, *ijtihad* means “exerting oneself”; while in the terminology of Islamic law it is used for “individual reasoning in general and a more restricted meaning, reasoning by analogy (*qiyas*).”⁸² The Islamic legal expert who is qualified to exercise *ijtihad* is called a “*mujtahid*”. The four jurists who founded the main *madhahib* are all accepted by Sunnis as absolute *mujtahids*, because they introduced the main methods for understanding the sources of Islamic religion, the Qur’an and the Sunnah. They

⁸² 'Idjtihad', in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition, (Brill, 2009), p.1026.

also used analogy to derive rulings from the sources in the absence of clear texts from the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah.

Until the tenth century, any scholar or legal jurist in Islamic Law could claim to be a *mujtahid*, but at that point the majority of scholars from all schools of jurisprudence agreed that “all essential topics of Islamic Law had been thoroughly discussed and finally settled” (Kamali, 2008: 94). Contrary to these assumptions as to the closure of the *ijtihad* gate, Wael B. Hallaq (1984) argues in his seminal article, *Was the gate of ijtihad closed?*, that the gate of *ijtihad* had never been closed - neither theoretically, nor practically. Furthermore, he states that

by chronologically analyzing the relevant literature on the subject from the fourth/tenth century onwards, it will become clear that (1) jurists who were capable of *ijtihad* existed at nearly all times; (2) *ijtihad* was used in developing positive law after the formation of the schools; (3) up to ca. 500 A.H. there was no mention whatsoever of the phrase 'insidad bab al-*ijtihad*' or of any expression that may have alluded to the notion of the closure; (4) the controversy about the closure of the gate and the extinction of *mujtahids* prevented jurists from reaching a consensus to that effect (Hallaq, 1984: 4).

However, a gradual decline in creative legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*) has been felt throughout the centuries since its golden epoch in the 9th and 10th centuries, the formative period of Islamic law. Thus, a decline in creative legal theory gave way to *taqlid* (the Arabic word means literally to follow, imitate, obey), which means “acceptance of or submission to authority” (Kamali, 2008: 94). Accordingly, someone who follows a particular line of thought or way is called a *muqallid*, not

necessarily because of blind imitation. Since then, as Kamali (2008: 94) has argued, “every Muslim was an imitator (*muqallid*) who had to belong to one of the recognized schools,” although some limited *ijtihad* was practiced in positive law, as pointed out by Hallaq (1984: 12). As a result, *taqlid* has become the hallmark of the stagnation phase of Islamic law that lasted until the 16th and 17th centuries, and which produced a number of questions (such as the matters of *waqf* of cash or donation, coffee, music etc) that had never been asked by that time but were crucial to economic and social life in the Ottoman Empire (Hallaq, 1984: 31).

Another key concept in Islamic law, *fatwa*, fills the gap between doctrine and practice as an instrument of religious authority from the formation phase until today. *Fatwa* means “legal opinion on a point of law, the term ‘law’ applying, in Islam, to all civil and religious matters.”⁸³ The person who gives a *fatwa* is called a *mufti* and is mainly involved in specific cases and generally transmits the old views and precedents or concludes an opinion based on the main principles of Islam. To recall Hallaq’s claim against the closure of the *ijtihad* gate, *ijtihad* has continued to exist mainly through the work of *muftis* and their *fatawa*. Hussein Ali Agrama states:

even without *ijtihad*, *muftis* have always been quietly, creatively adapting ostensibly rigid doctrine to everyday needs under the guise of *taqlid*, of simply reproducing previous rulings. It is through *fatwas*, then, that the gap between the fixed past and a constantly changing present and future is bridged (2010: 8).

⁸³ See ‘Fatwa’, in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New edition (Brill), 2009: 866.

However, the functions of traditional religious law were transformed with the advent of colonialism. Western encroachment in the Muslim lands and its direct influence over the government laws as well as social institutions made “the nation-state a central player in the moral and political life of subject peoples” (Moosa, 2009: 167). For example, in India new judicial institutions began to be established on a British model from the late 18th century. As Zaman (2009: 212) has pointed out, “it was by judges trained not in the *Shari‘a* but in English common law that it was implemented.” In the meantime, the *‘ulama*, on the one hand, challenged this by aiming at reforming Islamic tradition and re-establishing social institutions in order to meet the needs of society. On the other hand, however, they found themselves in conflict with “new religious intellectuals” who were the product of Westernised colleges and universities students, often with no formal grounding in the Islamic sciences but with a tendency to interpret the foundational texts (see Zaman, 2009: 212).

When modernity and Muslims met, some prominent figures, for instance Shah Waliullah (d.1762), harshly criticised the *‘ulama* for being pure *muqallid* and “argued that unquestioning adherence to late compilations of legal decisions was an inadequate guide to religious truth” (Metcalf 1982: 37). Shah Waliullah’s summons and influence on renewal movements in the Indian subcontinent, such as Deobandism, Ahle-Hadis, and Barelwism (Metcalf, 1982; Sanyal, 1996: 35-37; Lewis, 1994: 36-40; Geaves, 1996: 146-151), played an important role in the shaping of these movements. In addition to Shah Waliullah, other pre-modern reformists such as Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d.1787), Ibn Mu‘ammar (d.1810), and Shawkani (d.1839) were “against the very essence of *taqlid*, the implementation of which had

become a firmly rooted practice among the populace, including the great majority of its intellectuals” (Hallaq, 1984: 32). In short, pre-modern reform movements such as Wahhabism that appeared in Arabia insisted on the right of *ijtihad* and condemned the practice of *taqlid* (Rahman, 1979: 199).

Subsequently, Muslims began challenging the questions and issues which modernity had imposed in the nineteenth century. From that point on, revivalist and modernist Muslims have started questioning the place of *taqlid* in the social life of Muslims as well as in Islamic law, and have made efforts to re-open the closed gate of *ijtihad*. In the pre-modern Muslim world, as Rahman (1982: 43) has argued, a kind of secularism appeared because of the stagnation of Islamic thinking in general and, more particularly, because of the failure of *Shari‘a* law and institutions to undergo development in order to meet the needs of the society. Thus, since the modernisation process was involved in various aspects of life, from politics and the army to religion and education, intellectuals were consumed in discussing the compatibility of western values with Islam and debating politics. As Fazlur Rahman has noted (1979: 222), the *‘ulama* were incapable of carrying the process forward from the basis provided by the early modernists. According to him, “this is why modernism, in so far as it existed at all, has been the work of lay Muslims with liberal education” (ibid, p.222). Furthermore, as Rahman (1982: 137) has argued, neo-revivalism/fundamentalism as the heir of the pre-modern reform movements has been unable to devise any methodology, any structural strategy, for understanding Islam or for interpreting the Qur’an. In Chapter 1, I discussed how because of social and religious transformations throughout the Muslim world, traditional religious authority and Islamic law had begun to disappear from the public arena, with the

substitutions of nation-states and western law codes. Hallaq rightly observes the situation of the Muslim world and concludes that:

The rise of modern dictatorships in the wake of the colonial experiences of the Muslim world is merely one tragic result of the process in which modernity wreaked violence on venerated traditional cultures (Hallaq, 2005: 206).

Technically, the process of *ijtihad* is fundamentally a text-related activity embracing two principal tasks: the authentication of texts and the interpretation of texts. The Qur'anic text is considered incontestable by the vast majority of Muslim scholars; consequently, the overwhelming majority of *mujtahids* have focused on textual analysis of the *hadith* literature, not necessarily the *hadith* text and content, rather the chain of transmitters (*isnad*).⁸⁴ As a result, in addition to the main sources of the Islamic religion (the Qur'an and *Hadith*), *ijma'* (a scholarly consensus) and *qiyas* (a process of analogical reasoning) were developed and became the most fundamental part of the methodology of Islamic law (*usul al-fiqh*). Furthermore, every school of law contributed to that by exercising *ijtihad* and bringing in supplementary methodologies, such as *istihsan* (a process of legal preference) among the Hanafis; *istislah* (seeking the greater benefit to act on public interest) among the Malikis; '*urf*' (custom or precedents) among the Hanbalis; and *istishab* (presumption of continuity) among the Shafi'is.

⁸⁴ 'Ijtihad', in Encyclopaedia of Religion, Second Edition, (USA: Thomson Gale, 2005), p.4373.

In order to exercise *ijtihad*, one must attain all necessary qualifications proposed by Muslim scholars (in the classical era⁸⁵ as well as in modern times). The contemporary reformist, Tariq Ramadan, gives a synthesis of these prerequisites in seven points: In order to exercise *ijtihad* in the Muslim world in general, and more specifically in Europe, the *mujtahid* must attain:

- 1) A knowledge of Arabic to the extent that it enables him to correctly understand the Qur'an and the *Sunna* and, especially, the verses and *ahadith* containing rulings (*ayat and ahadith al-ahkam*).
- 2) A knowledge of Qur'anic and *Hadith* sciences in order to know how to understand and identify the evidences within the text (*adilla*) and, moreover, to infer and extract rulings.
- 3) A deep comprehension of the *maqasid al-Shari'a*, their classification and priorities they subsequently bring to the fore.
- 4) A knowledge of the questions on which there was *ijma*: this requires knowledge of the works on secondary questions (*furu'*).
- 5) A knowledge of the principles of analogical reasoning (*qiyas*) along with its methodology (the causes – *'ilal* or circumstances – *asbab* of a specific ruling, conditions – *shurut* etc.).
- 6) A knowledge of his historical, social, and political context; that is, the situation of the people around him (*ahwal an-nas*) and the state of affairs, their traditions, customs, and the like.
- 7) Recognition of his competency, honesty, reliability, and uprightness (Ramadan, 1999: 87-88).

It can be noted from this quotation that the process of *ijtihad* entails specific scholarship and expertise, and it is not open to everyone, as has been discussed for

⁸⁵ For the conditions in the classical *usul al-fiqh* books by al-Basri (d.1044), Shirazi (d.1083), and Ghazali (d.1111), see Hallaq, Wael B., "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 16.1 (1984), pp.3-41, p.4-7.

the last two centuries. Of course, for those involved this expertise constantly requires more research and updating of the relevant corpus to be in line with the needs of the particular day and age. Nonetheless, it does not necessarily mean putting the entire heritage aside and embarking upon new rules and discourses. Like the *mujtahid*, the *mufti* is required to have certain qualities: “Islam, integrity (‘*adala*), legal knowledge (*ijtihad*), and the ability to reach, by personal reasoning, the solution of a problem.”⁸⁶

A *fatwa* is generally used for specific circumstances in which there is no clear text and similar precedent available, and it mainly binds the person who asks for legal opinion in a specific matter. In the past, *fatawa* were issued for both civil and religious matters; however, in the late modern era, they are mostly limited to the latter, as the majority of the Muslim world does not use Islamic law for civil matters (see Chapters 1 and 6). The terms *fatwa* and *ijtihad* are generally used synonymously, but a *fatwa* is often the result of the *ijtihad* process, and plays a mediator role between the theory and practice. Indeed, as a result of this role, the *mufti*, “within the community stands in for the Prophet” (Ramadan, 1999: 89).

Although the transformations in Islamic law happened throughout the Muslim world, the *ifta* (the act of issuing *fatwa*) is still a dynamic institution as a vehicle of religious authority. Alexandre Caeiro (2006) examines the tradition of *ifta* in a “diachronic style, speaking of of transformations in conceptualizations of religious authority, subjectivity, and agency,” and shows the continuity and change of this tradition in legal and socio-political contexts. He states (2006: 669) that until the 20th century, *fatwas* provided both religious guidance and legal expertise, but they have gradually lost their juridical importance since the legal systems of Muslim countries became

⁸⁶ 'Fatwa', in The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition (Brill, 2009), p.866.

secularised. However, *fatwas* are generally an instrument for learning rules and procedures, and tools in creating pious Muslim identities (ibid, p.663). As I discussed in the previous chapter, the establishment of *fatwa* centres in Egypt and India (Zaman, 2009: 226-7), and the ECFR in Europe is part of the endeavour on the part of *'ulama* to regain religious authority by providing religious and moral guidance for Muslims in such a way that lessens ambiguity. Furthermore, as the ethnographic study of Agrama (2010: 13) observes, “the *fatwa* is involved in a process of *tarbawiyah*, ethical cultivation, care of the self.”

It is worthwhile illustrating the thinking of Al-Qaradawi (b.1926), one of the most influential reformist figures among the contemporary *'ulama* (Mandaville, 2007: 109), on *taqlid*.⁸⁷ Al-Qaradawi classifies three opinions on the issue of *taqlid*: i) requiring following a *madhhab* strictly and rejecting *ijtihad*; ii) prohibiting *taqlid* and requiring *ijtihad* as obligatory for every Muslim, with legal rulings taken directly from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*; iii) permitting *taqlid* for anyone who has not reached the level of *ijtihad*. For the last opinion, al-Qaradawi quotes the view of Imam Hasan al-Banna (d.1949), the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood:

In his wisdom, Hassan al-Banna prefers the word *ittiba'* (to follow) over *taqlid* (to blindly imitate) in his principle, stating Muslims are to follow (*yattabi'u*) one of the great imams of Islamic jurisprudence.

⁸⁷ Between Absolutism and Negligence: Taqlid and Following a Juristic School, This article is translated from Sh. Qaradawi's work, *Kayfa Nata'mal Ma'a'l-Turath wa'l Tamadhhub wa'l-Ikhtilaf* (pp. 62-73), by Muslema Purmul.
<http://www.onislam.net/english/shariah/contemporary-issues/islamic-themes/451734-taqlid-and-following-a-madhhab.html> (Accessed on 16 April 2012).

He sees this opinion as best fitting the usage in Qur'anic contexts⁸⁸ which makes it praiseworthy and legally acceptable in his view. His conclusion is that *ittiba'* is the most suitable term. It is this term that leads Hallaq, after reviewing several articles⁸⁹ on *ijtihad* and *taqlid*, to complain about how the study of Islamic legal theory is suffering from "terminological confusion syndrome and an absent syndrome" (Hallaq, 1996: 136) The concept of *ittiba'* is generally absent from current studies, and according to him:

such an important concept is *ittiba'*, the ijthadic re-creation, justification and re-enactment of the madhab. In this concept lies the solution to many of the problems outlined in this theme (*ijtihad*, *taqlid*, and *madhab*), for *ittiba'* represents the middle ground between *ijtihad* and *taqlid*, and constitutes the genuinely "intellectual play" that reflected the loyalty to the *madhab* (ibid, p. 136).

It can be concluded from the above that *taqlid* is generally seen as imitation, and mostly by reformists as blind imitation since they oppose this notion; by contrast, the term *ittiba'* is following one of the legal schools as well as sustaining *ijtihad* according to the novelties of the time and place. *Fatawa* play an integral part in this process. However, how do such things play out in the context of contemporary Leeds? This is the focus of my next section.

⁸⁸ Maryam 19: 43 and Al-Kahf 18: 65-66.

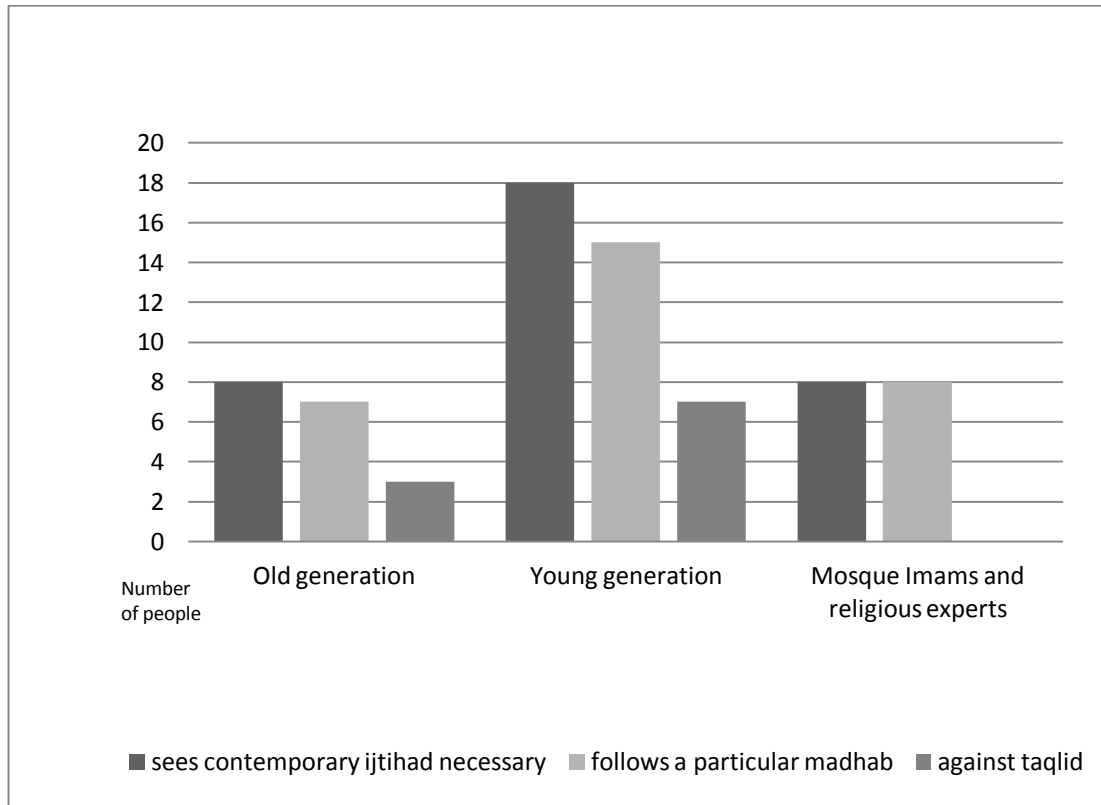
⁸⁹ See *Islamic Law and Society*, Volume 3, Number 2, Brill, Leiden: 1996.

7.2. *Ijtihad, taqlid, and fatawa among Sunni Muslims in Leeds:*

In a semi-structured interview, I put closed and open-ended questions both to 33 ordinary Muslims and to 8 religious experts (consisting of 10 from the LIC; 11 LGM; 9 IC; 9 LMM; and 2 independent from these mosques). The questions were as follows:

1. Which Islamic school of law do you follow in practice (*a'mal* and *ibadat* or religious deeds and observances)?
2. What is the reason for you to follow this (.....) school of law?
 - a) It is the common *madhab* in my country (national and local area).
 - b) It was taught to me by my parents, teacher, and others (.....).
 - c) I chose the *madhab* after a comprehensive research that answered my needs more accurately than the other three schools of law.
 - d) If none of the above, please specify.
3. Is it necessary to follow any of these schools of law in the contemporary world, where human beings can easily access every kind of knowledge?

I received various responses from the interviewees showing the religious diversity within the Sunni Muslim community in Leeds. Table 3 below illustrates generational and expertise-based attitudes towards following a particular *madhab*, *taqlid*, and *ijtihad*. I classify those up to 40 years old as the younger generation and those older than that as elders, and I am interested in whether generational differences affect the perception of following a school of law in the UK Muslim Diaspora. Experts include both the imams in the selected mosques and freelance experts active within their own communities and as researchers in Islamic studies.

Table 3: A comparison of attitudes towards taqlid and ijthad

Firstly, as regards following a particular *madhab* in practice (*a'mal* and *ibadat*), seven out of eleven of the older Muslims among my interviewees follow a particular *madhab*: one Maliki, one Shafi'i, one Hanbali, and four Hanafi. The remainder do not follow any particular *madhab*. For the younger generation, fifteen people out of twenty-two follow a particular school of jurisprudence. The Hanafi *madhab* has ten followers; the Shafi'i has two; while the other two *madhabs* have one follower for each. Within the remainder, one follows *Ahle Hadith*; one is *Salafi*; and three do not follow any particular *madhab*, apart from the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. Unlike the older and younger generations, all mosque imams and religious experts follow a particular *madhab*. Six are Hanafi, one Shafi'i, and the other Maliki.

Secondly, the majority of informants regard contemporary *ijtihad* as necessary. Religious experts wholly agree with that, but the views of the older and younger generation overlap for this category. Thirdly, those who are against *taqlid*, as we shall see below, argue that everything is clear in the Qur'an, Sunnah and the applications of the companions (*sahabah*) of the Prophet. Thus, it is not necessary to follow any particular *madhab* in religious practices.

In brief, the majority of my informants follow a particular *madhab* that confirms the general patterns of Sunni Muslim communities in Britain, since the overwhelming majority of Muslim communities come from the Indian subcontinent. Moreover, as clearly mentioned above, the prevalent *madhab* is Hanafi. Regarding Question 2 (see above), which has multiple options, I include only those people who follow a particular school of law. The main reasons for the respondents to follow a particular *madhab* were options a) and b): the prevalence of a *madhab* in a country, and family guidance in religious education. Unsurprisingly, option c) (comprehensive research) was scarcely chosen at all. Additionally, some added other reasons for following a particular *madhab*, such as "it is easier to practice" and "provides stronger evidence than the others." All of the respondents, however, said that all four schools of law are equally valid and offer a kind of flexibility and blessing from Allah, when we consider geographical and cultural difference.

As reflected in the previous chapter, where Sheikh Abdurrahman's speech on *madhahib* was discussed, Deobandis (see Metcalf 1982: 141, 297) as well as Barelwis (Sanyal, 1996: 176-177) strongly encourage adherence to the schools of law. Literature such as *The Legal Status of Following a Madhab* by Justice

Muhammad Taqi Usmani (b.1943)⁹⁰ is also influential for ordinary Deobandi and Tablighi Muslims in the LIC. In the case of the Barelwis (LMM), *Traditional Scholarship and Modern Misunderstandings: Understanding the Ahl Al-Sunna*,⁹¹ written by Abu Ammar, is an important book for them, in terms of explaining Barelwi beliefs and practices including *taqlid*.

Most Sunnis in Leeds follow a madhab, but a significant minority do not. Some of my informants in LGM and Leeds IC are reformists who are against following a particular *madhab*. Within this group of people, a great deal of respect is generally shown to the leaders of the four schools of law, but it is pointed out that during the Prophet's era none of these schools existed; there were just the Qur'an and the model of the Prophet Muhammad. This reformist discourse is especially popular among members of the Muslim Brotherhood at LGM, while the IC is a branch of UKIM which is affiliated to Jama'ati Islami, and "the criticism of Abul A'la Maududi (d.1979) on *taqlid*" (Lewis, 1994: 41) can be seen there.

As a result, both a 'traditionalist' and a 'reformist' position towards following a particular *madhab* is noticeable among Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds. I shall now illustrate the views of ordinary Muslims in each of the selected mosques in turn.

⁹⁰ It was originally published as an article in a monthly journal, *Faran*, in 1963. Later on, in 1976, the author expanded its content and published it as a book. The above-mentioned book is a translation by Afzal Hoosen Elias, and is the third edition (Karachi: Zam Zam Publishers, 2006).

⁹¹ This is freely distributed as a hard copy in Barelwi mosques and electronically available online: <http://www.islamicinformationcentre.co.uk/alsunna.htm>.

7.2.1. Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC):

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, the LIC is mainly dominated by South Asian Muslims with their Deobandi-Tablighi religious orientation. The strong traditionalist orientation of Deobandi-Tablighis towards following a particular *madhab* shows itself in that 10 research participants from this mosque including the ex-imam all report that they follow the Hanafi *madhab*. Regarding Question 2, a) country of origin and b) family are the factors that have most influence on choosing this *madhab*. For Question 3, regarding the necessity of following a school of law in the contemporary world, the respondents agreed that the four founders of the Sunni schools of law had such a knowledge and piety that in modern times nobody can reach that level. It is worth citing a couple of examples here. Ahmed, a 47-year-old taxi-driver who graduated from a university in Pakistan and came to Britain 19 years ago, says that:

I think, today we should follow any school of law. Because it is better to know what you are doing, and following a *madhab* enables us more to concentrate on religiosity, otherwise it would be confusing (interviewed on 20 March 2011).

Irshad, a 26-year-old estate agent, states that:

Yes, nowadays it is very important to follow one of these, because as a lay person it is very hard for me to open a religious book, Qur'an and *Hadith* book in order to derive *fiqhi* rulings, you know jurisdiction, from there. For example, if I pick up a pathology or neurology book and derive medicines from that book, so in order for me to derive the diagnosis and treatments

from that book, I have to have the knowledge to the level that I can do so. However, what I do, I go to the doctor, say and so on, so forth...the doctor diagnoses my illness, and gives the necessary treatment or medicine. It is easier, safer, you know free of risk. So likewise, following a *mujtahid* is coming on from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) since in that era, not every person was able to derive rulings based on the Qur'an and *Shari'ah*. Therefore, a *mujtahid* who is a specialist is like a doctor, yeah, so I think we should stick to a *mujtahid* (interviewed on 18 March 2011).

Similar responses were given in terms of following a *madhab*. Religious scholarship is seen as a job for *'ulama* and not the laity in this institution and the tradition it is associated with. Following a *madhab* secures the truth of particular religious practices because it is based on accumulated tradition, continuity with the past and has been tested over the centuries.

7.2.2. Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM):

The multi-ethnic and religious congregation of the LGM exhibits different tendencies in following a particular *madhab*. Eleven people including the mosque imam and a religious expert were interviewed and five of them report that they do not follow any particular *madhab* - which is relatively high as compared to the overall pattern of my results. Among the 'followers', there were 2 Shafi'i, 2 Maliki, 1 Hanbali, and 1 Hanafi. Geographical location (a) and family (b) are the main factors that have an impact on 'choosing' a *madhab*. The remainder who do not follow any particular *madhab* differ from each other in terms of preferences. For example, one claims that

he follows *ahle-hadith*. This is 27-year-old Hamid, who is from Jordan and is a PhD candidate at Leeds University. Based on the prophetic tradition, he says:

The Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, “the best of people are my companions, then next to them, and then next to them.” I follow the *ahle-hadith* because they were the closest to the time of the Prophet and the companions, so the closest means being correct (interviewed on 3 February 2011).

In fact, the early *salaf* (the first three generations) includes great jurists who played vital roles in the formation of Islamic jurisprudence. When I reminded my informant of this, he replied, “Indeed, I follow, not any of these, but all and other jurists.” It means following a mixture of these schools and the early companions or the consensus of the scholars (*ijma*), the third source of Islamic law. Another informant, Saleh (a 33-year-old), also follows *salafi* thought, and he relies on the proofs from the main sources (the Qur’an and *Sunnah*) as well as his own interpretation. If he has any problem, he consults another scholar (interviewed on 7 February 2011).

Regarding Question 3, on the necessity of following a *madhab* in the contemporary world, the ‘followers’ say that the four jurists reached the peak of Islamic law by deriving the rules and issuing legal opinions. Thus, benefiting from the existent methodology of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), new approaches meeting the needs of contemporary age should be made. For instance, Masud (40 years old), a regular member of the congregation and working in a private company as an accountant, expresses his opinion:

It is true that information is easily accessed, but it is better to have someone who has deep religious knowledge. Fortunately, we have Sheikh al-Judai in this mosque. As the prophet of Allah (pbuh) said, in a period of hundred years there will be a scholar who could revive the *ummah*. It is better to have a *mujaddid* [‘reviver’] than following these schools. Of course you will not disagree with them on the basics of religion, but look for example at what is happening now with revolutions in our countries. Some schools of thought say that it is prohibited to revolt against the ruler. And we have heard that Sheikh al-Judai and Sheikh al-Qaradawi have given their *fatwa* that we are in a different time, that it used to be prohibited because the people at that time were armed, and that is the norm. But in our time, there is no fear for a group of people to go out on the streets and protest against the rulers for their rights. However, the rulers have killed many innocent people so far, and there is no *‘adala* [justice]. But again, it is better to have someone who gives you a fresh interpretation, because it is contemporary and goes with the time we are in now (interviewed on 7 March 2011).

The informant emphasises the importance of having contemporary *‘ulama* who have the tools and methodology to give *fatawa* according to the present-day conditions. In the contemporary world, everything is dynamic and changing day by day, so the religious guidance and *fatawa* need to be updated to meet the needs of society. Of course, as the informant has pointed out above, the basics of Islam are already established, and hence the *‘ulama* should approach Islamic law to update it in order to find solutions to the current problems, considering socio-political facts.

7.2.3. Leeds Iqra Centre (IC):

The UKIM-affiliated mosque has a mainly Pakistani Muslim congregation, and nine people including the imam were interviewed. Five Muslims among the participants follow Hanafi *fiqh* in their religious practices. The remainder report that they do not follow any particular madhab, but only the Qur'an and *Sunnah* of the Prophet, since everything is clear from these two sources of Islamic law. Again, this might be seen as relatively high but, like LGM, reflects both a reformist orientation and an associated social profile which tends to be more educated, professional and middle class than the majority of Muslims in Leeds, although individuals' stories are always complex. For example, 56-year-old Munir came to the UK about 33 years ago and holds dual citizenship. Despite graduating from a university in Pakistan he works as a taxi driver in Leeds. He claims that:

It is not necessary to follow any of them, since everything is clear to me from the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, and I am simply a Muslim. Personally, I do not like even people being segregated as Sunni or Shi'a. Our Prophet (pbuh) was not either Sunni or Shi'a. I do not follow any school of law. I am just Muslim like our beloved Prophet was. I do not look at schools of thought, everybody has the right to think whatever way they like and there is no right to insult them. In my case, I have no specific leader to follow other than the holy Prophet (interviewed on 15 April 2011).

Additionally, a 33-year-old self-employed university graduate, Firdews, says that:

First of all, I do not agree with this terminology, about being *Hanafi*, or *Shafi'i*, because Islam did not give any terminology in this world to follow

specifically these *imams*, basically. I think I have not heard or read about anything that the scholars said about how “You have to follow these schools.” But, unfortunately the elder Muslims just followed these *imams*, not the messages that they want to convey to Muslims ...One word in the Qur’an we hear is the word Muslim, but those words like *Hanafi*, *Maliki*, are not allowed in Islam, to be honest. That is why I should not say I am not following these things, but I should say that I follow the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*, I follow these mixed scholars, not just one of them, because they worked very hard for Islam and they did a good job for every Muslim (interviewed on 15 April 2011).

Like some at LGM, these respondents are against any attribute other than ‘Muslim’. They pay tribute to the work of the early jurists, but accuse the *muqallid* (‘follower’) as not having understood their message properly. Mukarram, a 37-year-old self employed who came to the UK about twenty years ago and gained a Bachelor’s degree in Bioscience from Leeds University, expresses a similar sentiment:

When Islam emerged, there was only the Qur’an and the Prophet’s *Sunnah*. So we need to go to our original sources, the Qur’an and the *Sunnah*. Yes, there are issues where you have to seek some scholarly advice, based on their *ijtihad*, but personally, I do not follow any school of law. I implement the methodology of Imam Abu Hanifa, and if anything contradicts the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), then leave it. Anything which I have problems with, I mean finding the *hadith* or answer from the *Sunnah*, then I would refer to different scholars. I would not follow any scholar just

because my parents are following him, or because my local area follows him
(interviewed on 18 April 2011)

This informant questions traditional religious authority and applies what he understands from the sources; in case of any problem, he consults a scholar. Contrary to the main tendency among Pakistani Muslims, he does not follow a particular *madhab* because of family, or location. This is because he does his own research and relies on his understanding from the sources. However, the other participants who follow a *madhab* in this mosque vigorously express the need to follow a *madhab*, especially in the contemporary age. “If we follow any of these schools of law, it would be more easy and reliable to practise our religion” says self-employed taxi-driver, 52-year-old Haji Sadiq, a college graduate in Pakistan who has been in Britain over 35 years (interviewed on 15 March 2011).

As can be seen from the above statements, the informants in this mosque gave different responses to following a particular *madhab* in the contemporary world. Contrary to other mosques, in which the origins of congregation are mainly from the Indian subcontinent (LIC and LMM) and almost all follow a *madhab*, Muslims in the IC have different views on that. Indeed, it depends on the informant’s religious knowledge or background whether he declares himself as not being a follower of a *madhab*. For example, in the case of Mukarram, he stated once that he was going to a *tafseer* circle when I entered the mosque. Several of his friends created a reading group, and regularly they come together and read chapters from the Qur’an and discuss the importance of the themes revealed. This reveals the informant’s level in religious knowledge, as he can attempt to interpret the sources. This is arguably an exception from the expected typical ordinary Muslim’s religious life.

7.2.4. Leeds Makkah Masjid (LMM):

Like with the LIC, all participants at LMM report that they follow a particular *madhab*, the Hanafi. In this mosque, I conducted interviews with nine people, including two religious experts. Similar to the LIC, strong adherence to traditional religious authority is noticeable in this mosque, too. Regarding Question 2, on factors encouraging the following of a *madhab*, all participants informed me that a) location and b) family were important. Additionally, some younger participants added that they had researched the other three *madhahib* after seeing the different ways in which they implemented the law. Indeed, some challenges for the younger generation arise when they have contact with other Muslim ethnicities, for example, when on holiday in Muslim countries or on *Hajj* (pilgrimage). More routinely, if they attend university and share the prayer room with others from diverse cultural and sectarian backgrounds they also encounter Muslim difference more than their parents' generation. For example, 23-year-old British-born Fadlullah, an undergraduate student, says:

Before coming to the university, I was not aware of the existence of the other *madhabs*, *Shafi'iyya*, *Malikiyya*, and *Hanbaliyya*. However, I am still learning the difference between them, asking either my classmates or fellow Muslims, who are from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, in the Green Room [the university prayer hall] (interviewed on 02 February 2011).

Another informant, British-born Jaweed (21), says:

When I read books about the other three imams and their methodology, I noticed that all used the views of Imam Abu Hanifa [the oldest of the

scholars] and I am very comfortable about following him (interviewed on 09 February 2011).

Regarding Question 3, on the necessity of following a *madhab* today, not only ordinary Muslims but also religious experts, as we shall see in the proceeding section, undoubtedly see it as necessary to follow a *madhab* in the contemporary world. Another British-born attendee at LMM named Shamsat (24), who is an employee in a supermarket, states:

It is best to adhere to a particular *madhab*. Unfortunately, there are many people who have the wrong interpretation; they simply open a *hadith* book and interpret things out of context. I saw many people who deviated from the true path in favour of their own interpretations. Gradually they began not to practice religion in daily and *jum'ah* [contexts] but to abandon it (interviewed on 10 February 2011).

According to this informant, the trend among some Muslims not to follow a particular *madhab* underestimates the importance of religious beliefs and practices and eventually causes many people to abandon their religious practices. When people who claim not to follow any school of law face difficulties in religious practices, they interpret the facts in favour of their desires and wishes. Thus, they put their religious life and consequently their afterlife in danger by not following a particular traditional religious authority, according to the informant. Some informants have claimed that the continuity of the four schools over more than a millennium shows their reliability. British-born Rida, a 30-year-old information technologist, argues that:

If you look at the life of all these scholars [the four jurists], they were really pious people with high levels of morality dispersed among the community and they improved the society, not only Muslims but also non-Muslims including Jews and Christians. So, I think it is still necessary to follow them, because the four imams and other great scholars are like the jewel of Islam, the light of Islam... Today, they are still followed by many Muslims, they are still shining, and they are great scholars (interviewed on 25 February 2011).

The continuity of the four schools of law over the millennium, providing a long solutions to religious life, gives further confidence to this informant and other ordinary Muslims, as reported above. The choice of the overwhelming majority of the Muslim population in the world to follow a *madhab* is another factor that should be stated here.

7.2.5. Mosque imams and religious experts:

The same set of questions was asked of the imams of the selected mosques and of religious experts. They were also asked about the status of the contemporary *mujtahid*, and the possible contribution to Islamic Law of such a scholar in light of the needs of Muslims in Britain. I shall start by examining their responses to the first group of questions as I have done above, and then in the following section, I will move onto the supplementary questions about *mujtahids*.

Firstly, regarding the responses regarding following a *madhab*, the imams of the four selected mosques are all implicitly following one of the schools of jurisprudence. Seven out of eight experts have chosen to follow a particular school of law. Unlike

the congregation interviewed in the LGM and IC, interestingly, the imams of both mosques follow a *madhab*, Maliki and Hanafi, respectively. The attitudes of the other two mosque imams (from LMM and LIC), *Barelwi* and *Deobandi* respectively, as can be predicted from the above discussion, both follow Hanafi *fiqh*.

The one religious expert who does not follow any particular *madhab* is Dr. Hassan al-Khatib (63), a committee member of the LGM. He is from Iraq and came to the UK about 40 years ago for post-graduate study, and describes himself as a *da'iyah* (preacher). As the chair of Leeds Muslim Forum (see Chapter 5), he is very active in terms of representing Muslims in the city. He states that he follows the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-ikhwan al-muslimin*, founded by Hassan al-Banna (d.1949) in Egypt), which is committed to applying the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* to social life. Furthermore, he says that:

We follow contemporary *imams*, those who are living amongst us, and we learn from them. The books of all the four *imams* are available, but we have our own different challenges that need a living *imam* to understand and direct us (interviewed on 8 February 2011).

I asked Dr. Hassan his reason for following the Muslim Brotherhood, and he replied: "Well, because they are intellectual and closest to practising the true message of Islam."

Secondly, the reasons the imams and religious experts give for following a *madhab* generally combine all the first three options in the relevant question. Thus, comprehensive research about all the schools of law (option c) strengthens what has been learnt from family and local precedents (options a and b, which are typical of

the congregation). For the four selected mosque imams, while the official imams of the LIC, IC, and LMM, all follow the Hanafi *madhab* in practice, the imam of LGM is Maliki. This reflects the preferences in their relevant countries of origin, as I demonstrated in Chapter 4. Of the remaining experts, two are Hanafi (Imam Qasim, deputy imam of LMM; current imam of LIC) and one is Shafi'i (Sheikh Hasan, a religious expert in Britain for over 20 years).

Thirdly, as regards following a particular *madhab* in the contemporary age, the overwhelming majority of religious experts follow one of the four schools of law, and agree on the necessity of following a *madhab*. The current imam of LMM (Sufi-Barelwi oriented), Qari Asim, aged 34, says:

Because you do not know anything, a lay person who does not know anything will be following someone - either perhaps at the beginning you learnt from your family or from the environment. You cannot do it without *taqlid* (imitation), for instance you are following your father perhaps at an early age, or the local *imam*. And the father or the local imam is following someone at the end of the day. So it is acknowledging someone, otherwise *hadith* books are like a pharmacy which has different medicines for a cold. So it's as though, first, you go to the doctor to find out which medicine you want from the pharmacist. Moreover, that is why what the *imams* have established, the four *madhabs*, they did like doctors. So they have gone through all the *hadith*, they have known what is in the market and have selected these (interviewed on 27 March 2011).

As I have illustrated in the above sections, generally a believer follows a school of law because of parents or the culture of a geographic location. The doctor and pharmacy example given by Imam Asim confirms that the topic has been perceived by both ordinary and religious experts in more or less the same way. Another religious expert, 24-year-old Mawlana Yousef, supports the above quotation by saying:

In this day and age, people are not capable of studying all the necessary Islamic sciences, or interpreting the Qur'an and the *Hadith*. From my own experience, it takes at least ten years to reach some certain level to understand the theoretical issues and methodology in deriving rulings from the sources (interviewed on 28 March 2011).

Mawlana Yousef describes himself as a *Deobandi 'alim*, who has gained about ten years' educational experience from Dewsbury *Dar al-Ulum*, one of the most prominent centres of the Deobandi tradition in Britain (see Birt and Lewis, 2010). In the view of many religious experts, such prerequisites are essential qualifications and represent a challenge to anyone who says that it is not necessary to follow a school of law today. In addition to the required knowledge, according to 42-year-old Ershad, the imam of IC (Jama'ati Islami- affiliated UKIM's branch),

someone has to be well aware of the current social facts and must have ability to deploy a certain methodology to understand and interpret the sources for the needs of society.

Furthermore, he says that:

The knowledge is available, the internet, books cannot give you the true meaning, you need a teacher to understand, interpret, and relate to the current situation ...if you have all *hadith* in your laptop, read them, and you do not know how to compare, understand background context, and situation, you cannot decide. That is why you still need wise, learned scholars to guide... (interviewed on 22 April 2011).

This quotation sheds light on our discussion in terms of how *ijtihad* and *taqlid* are perceived by many Muslims. Contrary to the mass education theory, which “fosters a direct, albeit selective, access to the printed word and a break with earlier traditions of authority” (Eickelman 1992: 646), the process of assessment by qualified scholars is a key factor which must not be forgotten by a believer if s/he feels that it is not necessary to follow a *madhab*. The imam of LGM (multi-ethnic and multi-sect), Sheikh Muhammad (aged 42), who initially answered the question about the necessity of following a *madhab* negatively, then explained its importance:

It is not necessary to follow a *madhab*, except if you want to understand and study Islamic Law. The best thing is to start with following a *madhab* until you become knowledgeable in that school of law, understand the major rules, you know, how to deal with the *fiqh*. And after that you are required to study the others, their evidence and methodology. After evaluating the others’ rulings you can argue something not contradicting the Qur’an and *Sunnah* (interviewed on 31 May 2011).

Obviously, this route is for a researcher or potential *mujtahid*, but the sheikh maintains that for a lay person or non-specialist is not necessary to involve oneself in

this education process. Even in the case of the candidate *mujtahid* described above, at the beginning of study s/he follows a particular *madhab* to a certain level.

To conclude this section, then, the mosque imams in the selected mosques follow a particular *madhab*, choosing as the reasons a) geographic location, b) family, and c) some research about all schools of law. Regarding the third question, following a particular *madhab* in the contemporary age, religious experts see that someone attempts not to follow a particular *madhab* in contemporary age must have proficiency in Islamic sciences and law; ability to relate current social facts when interpreting the sources; knowledge of methodology and tools and how they are to be used in the production of legal rulings. These are the conditional requirements raised by the imams of the four mosques, LMM, LIC, IC and LGM, for lay people to be able to judge by their own analogy if they do not follow a *madhab*. As a result, it seems inevitable for a lay person to follow a particular *madhab* as far as the mosque imams and religious experts are concerned. Nonetheless, some ordinary people as discussed above prefer not to follow any particular *madhab*. Among the participants, even if the number of such Muslims is low, it is nonetheless an important fact in terms of individual approaches (Salvatore, 2009: 193; Cesari, 2005:4-5) towards religious beliefs, practices, and authority.

7.3. Towards a contemporary *mujtahid* in the British context:

Ijtihad will remain a dynamic institution in Islamic law as long as Muslim communities confront changing dynamics and eligible scholars are available. The majority of Muslims face many difficulties and challenges in the implementation of religious belief and practices (see Chapter 6) and so, while it is an issue that many

will defer to the scholars, one would expect them to see the necessity for *ijtihad*. The “challenges of Muslim Diaspora law” (Khan and Ramadan, 2011:215) consist of a number of elements, from *zakah* (alms-giving) and its relationship to tax given to the host country, to benefits taken from the state; from the Islamic way of life to the Western one, and engaged citizenship; from inter-faith marriages to *halal* foods and interest in the sphere of mortgages and banking (ibid, p.221-238).

In Britain, the anxiety of first-generation Muslims in their religious feeling “from total lapse of religious observance” (Barton, 1986: 177) eventually shifted their “self-perception from being sojourners to settlers” (Lewis, 1994: 56) and they established mosque and educational organisations in an effort to preserve religious identity. However, despite being a dynamic process, this transplantation routinely witnessed a reproduction of “ethnic” and “sectarian” (Lewis, 1994: 56; Geaves, 1996: 160) divisions that already existed in the homeland. As Ramadan (1999:100) has pointed out, fundamental contemporary problems are intertwined with emotion, feeling, fear and other psychological and social inferences which often make it difficult to identify the exact and objective nature of the problems themselves. The inter-generational stress between first-generation migrants and the second and third generations (Geaves, 1996:218) has contributed to this.

He has warned of “sectarian influences endangering any effort towards creating a truly indigenous Islam” (Geaves, 1996:218), and together with the lack of a single religious authority for all Muslims in Britain (see Chapter 5 and 6), this seems to be the biggest obstacle for developing a Muslim Diaspora law. According to Tariq Ramadan,

The simple and natural contrast between the first generation of Muslim immigrants who tried to protect their religious identity by being discreet and invisible as possible and increasing number of their children who have become assertive and self confident about their rights (for they understand they are at home in the West) has brought about a fundamental disruption in the thought of some prominent *'ulama* who considered, only 15 or 20 years ago, that to come back home (returning to Muslim countries) was the only solution to the seemingly inextricable religious and legal problems arising from living as Muslims in the West (1999:100).

The increasing “religiosity amongst the young British Muslims” and demand for developing “a distinct compassionate British Islam” (Lewis, 2007: 11-63) has compelled the *'ulama* to rethink the matter and to return to the sources in an attempt to provide Muslim communities with an appropriate Islamic framework and a set of rulings fitting their new situation (Ramadan, 1999:101).

As we noted in the previous chapter, the establishment of the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR) in 1997 (Zaman, 2009: 226) is a collective effort by the *'ulama* to meet that need, though most ordinary Muslims know almost nothing about the ECFR.

In this section, I focus on the concept and perception of the ‘contemporary *mujtahid*’ and on such a scholar’s contribution to minority *fiqh*. For that purpose, during my interviews with religious experts in Leeds I asked some additional questions:

- In the contemporary era, what should the characteristics of a religious expert or *mujtahid* be, and what kind of status should be given to such a religious expert so that s/he can be more effective in this religious role?
- How could Muslim scholars in Europe, particularly in the UK, contribute to Islamic heritage in terms of producing a new methodology and solutions to current problems?

In the first place, all eight religious experts agreed that a *mujtahid* must be equipped with knowledge of the main sources of Islamic law and other relevant conditions elaborated above (see Hallaq, 1984: 4-7; Ramadan, 1999: 87-88). Additionally, they also agree on the necessity of knowledge about the circumstances of the society in which the *mujtahid* is living. However, a number of personal opinions are worthy of brief reflection; they not only give useful insights into the topic, but also provide insiders' views about what sorts of handicap Muslim scholarship has in the context of Britain. These handicaps, namely imposing a particular dogma (Deobandi, Barelwi, or Salafi), disunity among the *'ulama* as a result of this 'sectarianism', and lack of the tools developed for current situations, are some of challenges *mujtahids* face vis-a-vis exercising *ijtihad*. Thus, according to the religious experts, in the British context a *mujtahid*:

- must not impose a particular dogma, because *ijtihad* means taking a multi-dimensional view. A *mujtahid* is also leading by example, and is somebody who makes sense to rational people (Mohsin, a 54-year-old activist among the congregation in the IC, interviewed on 21 March 2011);

- should *issue a Fatwa* according to real-life conditions, practically. He should not be affected by previous teachers and tutors. I think currently they (*'ulama*) are still influenced by where they come from. So, that influence is still alive, and even the new students, because they are students of them, are still influenced as to how to carry on (Qari Asim (34), the imam of LMM);
- must, in addition to the knowledge of Islamic sciences, have a methodology of jurisprudence [*usul al-fiqh*] and tools to relate the knowledge of Islamic fiqh to the modern needs of the society. Knowledge, methodology, and the language are keywords in this process (Ershad (42), the imam of IC);
- should be a group of scholars [*ijma* or consensus] so that the *ijtihad* and *fatwa* would be more effective (Sheikh Muhammad (42), the imam of LGM).

Secondly, the status of a *mujtahid* is an ambiguous matter. The absence of centralised religious authority makes it almost impossible to pinpoint who is a *mujtahid* within the Sunni Muslim community. For instance, Qari Asim says that:

No status should be given, for even if a status is given by the state, it would be difficult. Not only schools of law, but also faith diversity, Deobandi, Barelwi, Ahle-Hadith, will come [into it].

On the one hand, it is true that there is a general fear among religious experts that a *mujtahid* could abuse his position in order to impose a particular dogma. On the other hand, they see that there is an urgent necessity for the *'ulama* to end fruitless

discussions and debates stemming from “sectarian” conflicts. Sheikh Muhammad proposes an election system about how the *‘ulama* would be appointed, and the outcome of this would be “*fatwa jama‘iyya*” (collective *fatwa*), similar to the establishment of the ECFR. He maintains that:

So if we have a kind of system to elect *muftis* and they are representatives of our communities, we have different communities, and different schools of thought, Sunni, Shi‘a, even, Barelwi, Deobandi, Ahle Hadith, and others. They should sit in a symbolic association of *fatwa* giving and they will answer the major and serious things [not about *taharat* (preparation for prayers) or *salat* (prayer)] about the challenges of the Muslim community in the UK and how to respond to them. This is what is required in our time. In the past, one *mufti* was enough for a city, but now because people are different in their knowledge and background, I cannot force them to follow me.

Subsequently, I put another question to the imam: ‘Do you think the ECFR is the best candidate for this role in Britain?’ He replied:

This is really a good attempt to create the ECFR, but if the whole Muslim community in Europe can agree to follow them, then this will bring Muslims to unity, but we are still suffering from disunity...sometimes when you talk about the ECFR, some people say, “Who are they?”, since they do not know anything about the ECFR. Although the ECFR brings the *muftis* from different nationalities, Pakistanis, Arabs, Turks, Indians, and others are there; many Muslims only listen to local imams, not to anybody else.

As we have witnessed in Chapter 6, local imams are the key religious authority in Muslim communities. However, in the British context, most of the time imams are actually appointed for certain roles within the mosque, such as leading prayers, delivering sermons, and tutoring in supplementary schools (Barton, 1986:113). Often, too, their function within the mosque is circumscribed by the influence of the mosque committee and ‘sectarian’ boundaries, even though a few pioneers have begun changing this limited role (Lewis, 2007: 94-104). Arguably, this explains why Mawlana Yousef (24) insists that it should be understood by the society that they [*mujtahids*] have a hierarchical superiority compared to mosque imams. It seems that the current habit of Muslim communities, particularly amongst South Asians (Deobandis and Barelwis), in seeking and following religious rulings is another task awaiting the contemporary *mujtahid*'s effort to solve current problems.

As regards producing a new methodology in Islamic law to meet the needs of the Muslim society living in Britain, the mosque imams and religious experts responded that, while well established already, the methodology of Islamic law developed according to the majority status of Muslims does need to be understood in light of minority status. The typical response was that in the past the scholars established the principles of Islamic law based on the Qur’an, *Sunnah*, *Ijma* (consensus), and *Qiyas* (analogy). They also deployed supplementary methods like *istihsan*, *istislah*, *urf*, and *istishab*, and such tools, according to my interviewees, are ready for scholars to apply in different times and places. For example, Sheikh Muhammad said that:

I disagree with those who say, “Let us have a new methodology to reform”.

I believe Islam is able to deal with things what we have already and the scholars have the right to think about things and give rulings about them,

using what our scholars used before. We have the principles of Islamic *fiqh*, so we have plenty of methodologies like *qiyas* and *maslaha*, to use rather than saying, “Okay, let us have a new methodology to reform for Muslims living out of Muslim countries”. Maybe we need to update the old methodology.

In similar vein, the imam of IC, Imam Ershad says,

Fiqh of minority, there is not much word about it in Islamic *fiqh*, but you cannot say this is a new thing. It is already in Islamic law but we have to develop it. Because Muslims had experience in the past just living in Muslim countries, and today, Muslims are living as minorities. This is a new phenomenon that has not happened in the past in our history. Because it is a new phenomenon, we have to develop more the *fiqh* of minority, and bring it up to standard. People are still consulting old books written in the context of Muslim majority. That is why they sometimes cannot solve the problems. Because where you are living, it changes your situation in the *fiqh* issues, so you will have flexibility.

According to both imams, seeking new methodology does not mean disregarding the well-established past. The situations and circumstances may change from time to time, and place to place. Thus, deploying the established methods and applying them to the current situations would be more reliable since they have already been tested. Muslim Diaspora law mainly deals with worldly matters (*mu'amalat*), and is not exempt from primary obligations of *ibadat* (acts of worship) including daily prayers, fasting in Ramadan, and so on (Khan and Ramadan, 2011: 215). However, for

Muslims in Europe worldly matters are obviously different from classical Islamic norms in *Shari'a* law. Thus, bringing in new rulings and *fatawa* in the light of objectives of Islamic Law, *maqasid al-Shari'a* to protect religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, and considering the norms of *daruriyyat*, *hajiyyat*, and *tahsiniyyat* (requisites, necessities, and embellishments respectively) are inevitable priorities for the *'ulama* to solve the European Islamic identity crisis (Ramadan, 1999: 101).

Religious experts express a similar opinion about the necessity of contemporary *ijtihad*, particularly in the European context. However, the problem they repeatedly mention relates to the acceptance of rulings and *fatawa* by ordinary Muslims. For instance, Qari Qasim (30), a Qur'an teacher at *al-Madina Jamia Masjid* in Brudenell Road, and deputy imam of LMM, states that:

When Muslims came to the UK, they faced problems like mortgages and insurance...so it is quite important for Muslim scholars to really understand the current situation and advise rulings to the people. But at the grass roots level it would not be acceptable when they talk about new rulings. People only accept rulings if they have a foundation in Islam. For example, it is known that interest is *haram* (forbidden) but there is a ruling that you can buy just one house with a mortgage, because you need to have a house based on a *fatwa* given by Imam Abu Hanifa that interest in *dar-al-harb* [abode of non-Muslim] is permitted (interviewed on 18 February 2011).

Legal rulings or *fatawa* are directly related to religious feeling and entail strong evidence from the sources of Islamic law. In the absence of absolute authority, if it is

not referenced with the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, religious people prefer not to follow the new rulings. For instance, a middle-class ordinary Muslim, Ajmal (51), used to have a mortgaged house, but because of his worry about the interest, he sold it. He currently lives in a rented house and pays more in rent, but he says, "I feel better about my religiosity" (interviewed on 29 March 2011).

There are also other reasons for Muslims, since to recall Sheikh Muhammad's statement, 'ethnic' and 'sectarian' factors affect the attitude of ordinary Muslims in following the new rulings. As documented in Chapter 5, Muslim communities are trying to come together in some basic practical matters, such as prayer timings and 'eid celebrations. However, a minority *fiqh* for all Muslims in Britain, and more broadly in Europe, seems a distant hope at present. The thoughts of Qari Asim nicely summarise the current situation:

Unfortunately, although in matters like citizenship no one disagrees that you have to obey the law being citizens of this country, a small minority of people actually does not follow this ; they tend to delight in doing whatever they want... in financial matters, too, some people take the known *fatawa*, others do not. Religious experts, in technical terms, yes religious experts should develop a new methodology to deal with new issues; there is no doubt about that. [But] at the moment, I think we are not mature enough to develop that kind of methodology.

To sum up, the *'ulama* of Leeds see that *ijtihad* in contemporary circumstances is necessary, but the *mujtahid* must be objective, not impose a particular dogma or sectarian views in the process of exercising *ijtihad*. The *mujtahid* must also know the

socio-cultural and economic circumstances within a non-Muslim country in order to contribute to ‘minority *fiqh*’. Currently, there is not one single *fatwa* institution for all Sunni Muslims in Britain. Instead, religious rulings and *fatawa* are as diverse as communities are. The starting point of religious authority for Muslim communities in Leeds is local mosque imams (see Chapter 6), and then links to well-known scholars within the same community circle, whether Deobandi, Barelwi, Ikhwani, Salafi, or Jama’ati Islami. As a result, the potential *mujtahid* operates within certain boundaries and appeals only to a limited audience among Sunni Muslims.

7.4. Conclusion:

This chapter provides evidence for the perception of Sunni Muslims about the concepts of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* in terms of religious belief and practices based on my research in Leeds. What is subject to change (*muqayyad*) and what is not (*mutlaq*), and who is eligible to exercise *ijtihad* are important questions in the discourse of *ijtihad*, which started in the tenth and eleventh centuries at the scholarly level and continued until the nineteenth century, but then widened its scope with the intervention of non-‘*ulama* (intellectuals, writers) in modernity, and ordinary Muslims in post-modernity. Thus, the perception of Sunni Muslims, not only ordinary but also experts, on such concepts has been reflected by studying four different mosque congregations.

The massive migration of Muslims to Europe in the second half of the twentieth century has formed a new phenomenon in Islamic law, ‘minority *fiqh*’. Among European Muslims, from the first generation to the indigenous-born, variable tendencies towards living as a Muslim in non-Muslim lands are discernible:

one sees individualization and/or the fragmentation of religious authority as leading to the liberalization of Islam, while the other considers that in spite of individualization and the diversification of authority structures, the current situation is characterized by a relative stability of dogma and, in any case, not by a liberalization of Islam (Peter, 2006:107).

In my case study, the majority of Muslim participants, both ordinary believers and religious experts, follow a particular school of law in religious beliefs and practices. In doing so, they tend to secure religiosity by following a particular *madhab*, and yet confirm that there is a need to develop existent methodologies in order to meet the needs of Muslims in Europe. For the majority of informants, the main reason to follow a *madhab* in the contemporary world is to secure one's religious life by closing the doors to any misunderstanding. As with Berger's 'sacred canopy', "the concern is not to be plunged into the chaos of anomy" (Berger, 1990: 39). In the context of Britain, with 52 per cent of Muslims being under 25 years of age (Lewis, 2007: 92), the importance of preserving them from the threats of politically radical groups (see Taji-Farouki, 1996; Wiktorowicz, 2005; Abbas, 2007: 3-4) is very great.

Contemporary *ijtihad* is a crucial task for scholars in the Muslim community in Britain to meet the needs of society. Individual efforts bind merely a certain community, as in the case of LGM, the only place where Sheikh al-Judai's *fatwa* on combining two prayers is being implemented among mosques in Leeds (see Chapter 6). Rather than a single Muslim identity, sub-identities such as traditionalist Sufi-Barelwi, Deobandi or reformist Jama'ati Islami, Ikhwani-Salafi have come into prominence. I can argue that in the case of Sheikh al-Judai, because he is an Arab or a reformist many Muslims do not even read his deductions and legal rulings. 'Ethnic'

and 'sectarian' convergence among the Sunni Muslim community in Leeds plays a highly important role in referencing the *mujtahid* and accepting the legal rulings.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have sought to present a local snapshot of Sunni Muslim religious life in Leeds, delving into religious practices, interactions between Muslims, patterns of religious authority, and continuity-change in its main traditional instruments, that is, *ijtihad*, *taqlid* and *fatawa*. Contrary to the theories of individualisation of religious practice and fragmentation of religious authority in modernity, I argue that Sunni Muslim religious life in Leeds continues in highly collective fashion, and mosque imams and *muftis* remain at the centre of religious authority for ordinary Muslims. Most of the research participants affirm that they follow one of the schools of law (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali). Nevertheless, they also assert that contemporary *ijtihad* is essential in the context of Britain in order to meet the particular needs of Muslims in this society. However, a minority *fiqh* is not very well developed and there are conflicting views even over the timings of 'Eid al-Adha and Ramadan. Intra-Muslim dialogue on such matters is lacking.

In order to set out the basis of my argument, in Chapter 1, I began with the encounter of Muslims with modernity, which resulted in transformations in the social, economic, political and religio-cultural life of Muslims during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the rates of social change were not at all uniform across society, religious faith and practice among elites and the new middle classes especially began to withdraw into private and individual life, while in many aspects of life colonial and still independent Muslim states replaced *Shari'a* law with Western laws and rules. The emergence of reformist and neo-traditionalist thought was a reaction to secularism, which saw Islam as the biggest cause for the Muslim

world's stagnation. Neo-traditionalists insisted more or less on the status quo position by following legal rulings issued by the early jurists like the Imams Abu Hanifa, Al-Shafi'i, Maliki, and Ibn Hanbal. However, reformists rejected blind and unquestioning adherence to the legal rulings of theologians-jurists in the formation period of Islamic law, with *ijtihad* having a special importance in the renewal of Islamic law. As literacy has grown in the modern Muslim world, and sources of knowledge have pluralised, the tension between reformists and neo-traditionalists on questions of *ijtihad* and *taqlid* have trickled down from the intellectuals and *ulama* to lay people and non-experts. Religious authority has become more ambiguous as lay people increasingly have the opportunity to interpret the sources of religion themselves.

As a by-product of Western colonialism, Muslims migrated to Europe in order to fill a labour shortage in the second half of the twentieth century. In Chapter 2, I provided general information on the migration process and institutionalisation of Muslim communities in Britain with reference to neo-traditionalist and reformist movements. Global trends are always configured locally as can be seen in the settlement of Muslim communities and reproduction of mainly neo-traditionalist South Asian heritage Islamic institutions in Britain. Early research by Barton (1986), Lewis (1993), Geaves (1994), and others on key movements suggests why patterns of religious tradition and authority amongst British South Asian Muslims have not corroded and been 'modernised' and individualised as in some other parts of the Muslim world. However, better educated reformists from the Indian subcontinent and the Middle East tend to be more 'modern' in their approach than traditionalists. It is also evident from this chapter that the question of who speaks with authority for

the Muslim community per se on a local or a national level is complex as Muslim communities are so religiously and ethnically diverse.

In Chapter 3, I narrated methodological reflections on the process of researching Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds. This provided a bridge into my ethnographic accounts in Chapters 4 to 7. In those chapters, I have sought to find answers to my research questions detailed in the introduction of the thesis. While studying Sunni Muslim communities in Leeds, I have shown that almost all the main themes of my thesis, including religious differences, conflicts, tradition, and authority, are directly or indirectly related to ‘ethnic’ and ‘sectarian’ (neo-traditionalist or reformist) diversity amongst Sunni Muslims, either South Asian (Deobandi, Barelwi, and Jama’ati Islami) or Arab (Salafi and Muslim Brotherhood). For example, Leeds Grand Mosque (LGM) is known as an Arab mosque with a reformist orientation; Leeds Iqra Centre (IC) is a branch of the reformist Jama’ati Islami; Leeds Makkah Masjid (LMM) and Leeds Islamic Centre (LIC) are traditionalist Sufi-oriented mosques, Barelwi and Deobandi respectively. The congregation in these last three mosques has mainly ethnic origins from the Indian Subcontinent.

Having a multi-ethnic Muslim population with different religious orientations in the same locality is potentially an opportunity for different Muslims to come to know each other better and to negotiate intra-Islamic pluralism. However, as the case study of *‘Eid al-Adha* presented in Chapter 5 shows, the absence of a single religious authority for all Sunni Muslims in Leeds (or the non-Muslim society of the UK more generally) means that there is no real mechanism for cooperation on agreed religious practices, such as when to start Ramadan and celebrate the two *‘eids*. The fragmented structures of religious authority, in terms of ethnic and sectarian clusters, whether

neo-traditionalist or reformist, are the biggest obstacles to unity. Meetings and talks for unity have been unproductive so far. Created as a unified platform to represent Muslims to the media and local authority after '9/11', Leeds Muslim Forum (LMF) was a temporary solution which regained momentum again after the '7/7' London bombings, but eventually closed in 2011, unable to bridge the sectarian divide.

Contrary to the assumption that religious life must become privatised and individualised in modernity, and religious authority further fragmented, this research suggests that the majority of Sunni Muslims in Leeds maintain traditional forms of collective religious life, with dogma and authority remaining relatively stable (Peter, 2006: 107). This is evident from Chapters 6 and 7 with the main instruments of religious authority - *ijtihad*, *fatawa*, and *taqlid* - working largely as they did in the past. The continuity of *taqlid*, following one of the four schools of law, can be given as a specific example in this regard. The majority of my informants affirm that they follow a particular school of law, while only a minority claim the reverse by interpreting the sources based on their own self-perceptions or understandings. Notably, not following a particular school of law (*taqlid*) is a preference for some ordinary Muslims amongst the congregation in the mainly reformist LGM and IC.

The four case studies of the mosques of Leeds suggest that imams are the focus for religious authority despite not being the most qualified in religious education. Easy access and close rapport between the imam and members of the congregation explain this. Mosque imams know their clients and accordingly give advice or legal opinions. Here, there is continuity in the traditional function of mosque imams. More expert *ulama* if available in the mosque or in the local/regional environment are often referred to, as in the case of Sheikh al-Judai in LGM. Furthermore, some young

Muslims consult prominent *fatwa* websites alongside mosque websites. Without embarrassment, female Muslims can here ask questions relating to their religious and social life (such as, forbidden acts during the menstrual period, rights in terms of husbands, working and studying).

Sunni Muslims in Leeds generally recognise that contemporary *ijtihad* is necessary to meet the needs of contemporary society. The need for a ‘minority *fiqh*’ is urgent, yet, the divergence of Muslim communities and the failure of previous attempts for unity in the city are not promising in this regard. Rather, there are as many *fiqhs* as Muslim communities. Sheikh al-Judai does attempt to solve problems Muslims face in the context of Britain. His *fatwa* on combining two prayers is a contribution to a minority *fiqh*. In Leeds, however, his *ijtihad* is merely implemented in Leeds Grand Mosque. Although he reaches a wider audience of reformists through the European Council for Fatwa and Research (ECFR), many other Muslims are entirely unaware of his deductions and legal rulings.

The content of questions asked of mosque imams for *fatawa* varies from simple matters of religious practice (in making mistakes during prayers, for instance) to socio-economic transactions such as income earned from selling alcohol and serving drunken people. Further research on the content of *fatawa* is necessary to see what new interpretations have been made in the context of ‘minority *fiqh*’. It would also be useful for research on women’s experiences in this regard.

Bibliography

- Abbas, T. (2005). Muslim Britain: communities under pressure. London, Zed Books.
- Abbas, T. (2007). Islamic Political Radicalism in Western Europe. Islamic political radicalism: a European perspective. T. Abbas. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press: 3-14.
- Abduh, M. (1966). The theology of unity; translated from the Arabic by Ishaq Masa'ad and Kenneth Cragg. London, Allen & Unwin.
- Abir, M. (1988). Saudi Arabia in the Oil Era: Regime and Elites : Conflict and Collaboration, Croom Helm.
- Abu Zahra, M. (2003). Tarihu'l- Mezahibu'l-Islamiyye (Islam'da Siyasi, Itikadi ve Fıkhi mezhepler tarihi). Istanbul, Istanbul Matbaacilik.
- Agrama, H. A. (2010). "Ethics, tradition, authority: Toward an anthropology of the fatwa." American Ethnologist 37(1): 2-18.
- Ahmad, A. (1967). Islamic modernism in India and Pakistan, 1857-1964. London, Issued under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs by Oxford University Press.
- Akpinar, C. (2000). İjzet. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi. Istanbul, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı. 21: 393-400.
- Algar, H. (2005). Ulama. Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition. L. Jones. USA, Thomson Gale. 14: 9438-9441.
- Al-Jeran, A. R. (1998). Muslims in Britain : between reality and ambition. PhD thesis, University of Glasgow.
- Al-Rasheed, M. (2002). A history of Saudi Arabia. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Al-Rasheed, M. (2005). Saudi Religious Transnationalism in London. Transnational connections and the Arab Gulf M. Al-Rasheed. New York, Routledge: 149-166.
- Al-Rasheed, M. (2005). Transnational connections and the Arab Gulf. New York, Routledge.
- Ammar, A. (2001). Traditional Scholarship and Modern Misunderstandings: Understanding The Ahl al-Sunna. Bristol, The Islamic Information Centre.
- Ansari, H. (2004). The "infidel" within: the history of Muslims in Britain, 1800 to the present London, C. Hurst.
- Arabi, O. (2001). Studies in modern Islamic law and jurisprudence. Hague; London, Kluwer Law International.
- Arkoun, M. (1994). Rethinking Islam: common questions, uncommon answers; translated by Robert D. Lee. Boulder; Oxford, Westview Press.
- Asad, T. (1986). The idea of an anthropology of Islam. Occasional Paper Series. G. University. Washington, DC, Center for Contemporary Arab Studies: 1-22.
- Badawi, Z. (1981). Islam in Britain. London, Ta Ha.
- Ballard, R. (2002). The South Asian Presence in Britain and its Transnational Connections. Culture and Economy in the Indian Diaspora. H. a. V. Singh, S. London, Routledge.
- Ballard, R. and Ballard C. (1977). The Sikhs: The development of south Asian settlements in Britain. Between Two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain. J. L. Watson. Oxford, Basil Blackwell.
- Bano, S. (2004). Complexity, difference and 'Muslim personal law' : rethinking the relationship between Shariah Councils and South Asian Muslim women in Britain PhD thesis, University of Warwick.

- Bano, S. (2008). "In Pursuit of Religious and Legal Diversity: A Response to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the 'Sharia Debate' in Britain." Ecclesiastical Law Journal 10(3): 283-309.
- Barton, S. W. (1986). The Bengali Muslims of Bradford: a study of their observance of Islam with special reference to the function of the mosque and the work of the imam. Leeds, Department Of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds.
- Baumann, M. (2000). "Diaspora: Genealogies of Semantics and Transcultural Comparison." Numen 47: 313-337.
- Bennett, C. (2005). Muslims and modernity: an introduction to the issues and debates. London, Continuum.
- Berger, P. L. (1990). The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion. New York, London, Anchor Books.
- Beyer, P. (2003). Defining Religion in Cross-National Perspective: Identity and Difference in Official Conceptions. Defining Religion: Investigating the Boundaries Between the Sacred and the Secular. A. L. Greil and D. G. Bromley, JAI.
- Birt, J. (2005). Locating the British Imam: The Deobandi 'Ulama between Contested Authority and Public Policy Post-9/11. In European Muslims and the secular state [for] the Network of Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe. Eds. Cesari, J. and McLoughlin, S. Aldershot, Ashgate: 183-196.
- Birt, J. (2005). Wahhabism in the United Kingdom: manifestations and reactions. Transnational Connections and the Arab Gulf. M. Al-Rasheed. New York Routledge: 168-184.
- Birt, J. (2006). "Good Imam, Bad Imam: Civic Religion and National Integration in Britain post-9/11." The Muslim World Vol.96: 687-705.
- Birt, J. and Lewis, P. (2010). The Pattern of Islamic Reform in Britain: the Deobandis between intra-Muslim sectarianism and engagement with wider society. Producing Islamic knowledge: transmission and dissemination in

- western Europe. S. Allievi and M. V. Bruinessen. London, Routledge: 91-120.
- Bolognani, M. (2007). "Islam, Ethnography and Politics: Methodological Issues in Researching amongst West Yorkshire Pakistanis in 2005." Int. J. Social Research Methodology 10(4): 279-293.
- Bram, J. R. (2005). Moon. Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition. L. Jones. USA, Thomson Gale. 9: 6170-6176.
- Branca, P. (2000). "Legal and actual authority - An old problem in Islamic political thought." Aevum-Rassegna Di Scienze Storiche Linguistiche E Filologiche 74(2): 511-531.
- Brewer, J. D. (2000). Ethnography, McGraw-Hill Companies, Incorporated.
- Bryman, A. (2004). Social research methods. Oxford Oxford University Press.
- Bukhārī, M. i. I. (1343 [1924]). Sahīh al-Bukhārī, al-Juz' al-awwal min kitāb / Abī 'Abd Allāh Muhammad ibn Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mughīrah ibn Burduzbuh al-Bukhārī al-Ja'afī, wa-bi-hāmishih hāshiyat al-Sanadī bi-tamāmihā wa-taqrīrāt min sharhay al-Qastalānī wa-Shaykh al-Islām. Miṣr [Egypt], al-Maṭba'ah al-Bahīyah.
- Bunt, G. R. (2000). Virtually Islamic: computer-mediated communication and cyber Islamic environments. Cardiff, University of Wales Press.
- Bunt, G. R. (2009). IMuslims: Rewiring the House of Islam, University of North Carolina Press.
- Caeiro, A. (2006). "The Shifting Moral Universes of the Islamic Tradition of Ifta": A Diachronic Study of Four Adab al-Fatwa Manuals." The Muslim World, 96.
- Calder, N. (1960 [i.e. 1954]-2009). taklid. The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition. H. A. R. Gibb. Leiden, Brill.

- Carney, A. a.-H. (2008). "Twilight of the idols? pluralism and mystical praxis in Islam." International Journal for Philosophy of Religion 64(1): 1-20.
- Cesari, J. (2003). Muslim minorities in Europe: the silent revolution. Modernising Islam: Religion in the Public Sphere in the Middle East and in Europe. J. Esposito and F. Burgat. London, Hurst: 251–269.
- Cesari, J. (2004). When Islam and Democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and in the United States, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cesari, J. (2005). "Mosques in French cities: Towards the end of a conflict?" Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 31(6): 1025-1043.
- Cesari, J. and McLoughlin, S. (2005). European Muslims and the secular state [for] the Network of Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe. Aldershot, Ashgate.
- Choueiri, Y. M. (1997). Islamic fundamentalism. London, Pinter.
- Chryssides, G. D. and R. Geaves (2007). The Study of Religion: An Introduction to Key Ideas and Methods, Bloomsbury.
- Clarke, P. B. and P. Beyer (2009). The World's Religions: Continuities and Transformations, Taylor & Francis.
- Cohen, A. P. (1985). The Symbolic Construction of Community, Routledge.
- Cohen, R. (1997). Global Diasporas: An Introduction, UCL Press.
- Commins, D. (2006). The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia, I. B. Tauris.
- Cracknell, K. (1985). "Within God Gracious Purposes - Interfaith Dialog in Britain." Ecumenical Review 37(4): 452-461.
- Dahya, B. (1974). The Nature of Pakistani Ethnicity in Industrial Cities in Britain. Urban ethnicity. A. Cohen. London, Routledge: 77-118.
- DeLong-Bas, N. J. (2004). Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad, I. B. Tauris.

- Dien, M. I. (2004). Islamic law: from historical foundations to contemporary practice. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Donohue, J. J. and J. L. Esposito (2007). Islam in Transition: Muslim Perspectives, Oxford University Press.
- Dyke, A. H. (2009). Mosques Made in Britain. London, Quilliam Foundation.
- Echchaibi, N. (2011). "From audio tapes to video blogs: the delocalisation of authority in Islam." Nations and Nationalism 17(1): 25-44.
- Eickelman, D. F. (1992). "Mass Higher-Education and The Religious Imagination In Contemporary Arab Societies." American Ethnologist 19(4): 643-655.
- Eickelman, D. F. (2000) "Islam and the languages of modernity." Daedalus 129, 119-135.
- Eickelman, D. F. and A. Salvatore (2002). "The public sphere and Muslim identities." Archives Europeennes De Sociologie 43(1): 92-115.
- Eickelman, D. F. and Piscatori J. P (1990). Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination, University of California Press.
- Eisenlohr, P. (2006). "The politics of Diaspora and the morality of secularism: Muslim identities and Islamic authority in Mauritius." Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 12(2): 395-412.
- El Shamsy, A. (2008). "Rethinking Taqlid in the Early Shafi'i School." Journal of the American Oriental Society 128(1): 1-23.
- Elshakry, M. (2011). "Muslim Hermeneutics and Arabic Views Of Evolution." Zygon 46(2): 330-344.
- el-Zein, A. H. (1977). "Beyond Ideology and Theology: The Search for the Anthropology of Islam." Annual Review of Anthropology 6: 227-254.
- Enayat, H. (1982). Modern Islamic political thought : the response of the Shi'i and Sunni Muslims to the twentieth century. London, Macmillan.

- Encyclopaedia of Religion, Second Edition. 2005. s.v. Ijtihad.
- Esposito, J. L. (1991). Islam and politics. Syracuse, N.Y., Syracuse University Press.
- Euben, R. (1995). "When Worldviews Collide - Conflicting Assumptions About Human-Behavior Held By Rational Actor Theory And Islamic Fundamentalism." Political Psychology 16(1): 157-178.
- Euben, R. L. and M. Q. Zaman (2009). Princeton Readings in Islamist Thought: Texts and Contexts from Al-Banna to Bin Laden, Princeton University Press.
- Fatwas of European Council for fatwa and research = qarārāt wa-fatāwá al-Majlis al-Urūbbi lil-Iftā' wa-al-Buhūth. (2000) Cairo, Islamic INC.
- Fetzer, J. S. (2004). Muslims and the state in Britain, France, and Germany. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Fetzer, J. S. and J. C. Soper (2003). "The roots of public attitudes toward state accommodation of European Muslims' religious practices before and after September 11." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 42(2): 247-258.
- Fıǵlalı, E. R. (2001). Çağımızda İtikadi İslam Mezhepleri. İstanbul, şa-to İlahiyat.
- Filali-Ansary, A. (2003). "The sources of enlightened Muslim thought." Journal of Democracy 14(2): 19-33.
- Frank, R. M. (1989). "Knowledge And Taqlid, The Foundations Of Religious Belief In Classical Asharism." Journal of the American Oriental Society 109(1): 37-62.
- Gale, R. (2005). "Representing the city: Mosques and the planning process in Birmingham." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 31(6): 1161-1179.
- Geaves, R. (1994). Sectarian influences within Islam in Britain with special reference to the concepts of "ummah" and "community". PhD thesis, University of Leeds.

- Geaves, R. (1995). *Muslims in Leeds* Leeds, University of Leeds, Department of Theology and Religious Studies.
- Geaves, R. (1996). Sectarian influences within Islam in Britain with special reference to the concepts of "ummah" and "community". Leeds, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds.
- Geaves, R. (2000). Sufis of Britain: an exploration of Muslim identity Cardiff, Cardiff Academic Press.
- Geaves, R. (2005). Islam and the West post 9/11. Aldershot, Ashgate Pub.
- Geaves, R. (2007). A Reassessment of Identity Strategies amongst British South Asian Muslims. Religious Reconstruction in the South Asian Diasporas: From One Generation to Another. J. R. Hinnells. New York, Palgrave Macmillan: 13-28.
- Geaves, R. (2010). Islam in Victorian Britain: The Life and Times of Abdullah Quilliam, Kube Publishing Ltd.
- Geaves, R. (2012). "The symbolic construction of the walls of Deoband." Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 23(3): 315-328.
- Geaves, R. A. (2009). A Case of Cultural Binary Fission or Transglobal Sufism? The Transmigration of Sufism to Britain. Global Networking and Locality: Sufis in Western Society. R. A. Geaves, M. Dressler and G. Klinkhammer. London, Routledge.
- Geertz, C. (1971). Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia, University of Chicago Press.
- Gellner, E. (1981). Muslim Society. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Gilliat, S. (1994). Perspectives on the Religious Identity of Muslims in Britain PhD thesis, University of Wales.
- Gilliat-Ray, S. (2010). Muslims in Britain: An Introduction, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

- Gilsenan, M. (2000). Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Middle East (second revised edition). London, New York, I.B Tauris.
- Hallaq, W. B. (1960 [i.e. 1954]-2009). talfik. The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition. H. A. R. Gibb. Leiden, Brill. 10: 161.
- Hallaq, W. B. (1984). "Was the Gate of Ijtihad Closed?" International Journal of Middle East Studies 16 (1): 3-41.
- Hallaq, W. B. (1999). A History of Islamic Legal Theories: An Introduction to Sunnī Usūl Al-fiqh. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Hallaq, W. B. (2001). Authority, Continuity, and Change in Islamic Law. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Hallaq, W. B. (2005). The origins and evolution of Islamic law. Cambridge, UK, New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Hallaq, W. B. (2009). An Introduction to Islamic Law, Cambridge University Press.
- Halliday, F. (2003). Islam and the myth of confrontation: religion and politics in the Middle East Modernising Islam : religion in the public sphere in Europe and the Middle East J. L. E. F. Burgat. London, C. Hurst
- Hamid, S. (2009). The Attraction of 'Authentic Islam': Salafism and British Muslim Youth. Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement. R. Meijer, Columbia University Press.
- Haw, K. (2011). "The 'changing same' of an 'in-between' generation: negotiating identities through space, place and time." Discourse-Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education 32(4): 565-579.
- Hefner, R. W. (1998). "Multiple modernities: Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in a globalizing age." Annual Review of Anthropology 27: 83-104.
- Hellyer, H. A. (2007). "British Muslims: Past, present and future." Muslim World 97(2): 225-258.

- Hopkins, N. and V. Kahani-Hopkins (2006). "Minority group members' theories of intergroup contact: A case study of British Muslims' conceptualizations of 'Islamophobia' and social change." British Journal of Social Psychology 45: 245-264.
- Hourani, A. (1994). Arabic thought in the liberal age : 1798-1939. I.B. Tauris.
- Ichwan, M. N. (2011). "Official Ulema and the Politics Of Re-Islamization: The Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama, Shariatization and Contested Authority in Post-New Order Aceh." Journal of Islamic Studies 22(2): 183-214.
- Ilyas, M. (1994). "Lunar Crescent Visibility Criterion and Islamic Calendar." Quarterly Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society 35: 425-461.
- Iqbal, M., Sir (1975). The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam. Lahore, Munib & Wahib Iqbal: dist. by M. Ashraf.
- Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All. 1997. The Runnymede Trust
- Ismail, S. (2008). "Muslim public self-presentation: Interrogating the liberal public sphere." Ps-Political Science & Politics 41(1): 25-29.
- Jensen, T. G. (2006). "Religious authority and autonomy intertwined: The case of converts to Islam in Denmark." Muslim World 96(4): 643-660.
- Joly, D. (1995). Britannia's crescent: making a place for muslims in British society. London, Aldershot.
- Kalmbach, H. (2008). "Social and Religious Change in Damascus: One Case of Female Islamic Religious Authority." British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 35(1): 37-57.
- Kamali, M. H. (2008). Shari'ah Law: An Introduction. Oxford, Oneworld Publications.
- Kamrava, M. (2006). The new voices of Islam: reforming politics and modernity: a reader. M. Kamrava. London, I.B. Tauris: 1-27.

- Khan, L. A. and Ramadan, H. M. (2011). Contemporary Ijtihad: Limits and Controversies, Edinburgh University Press.
- Khan, Z. H. and Watson, P. J. (2004). "Religious orientation and the experience of Eid-ul-Azha among Pakistani Muslims." Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion 43(4): 537-545.
- Knott, K. (1992). The role of religious studies in understanding the ethnic experience. Leeds, University of Leeds.
- Knott, K. (2005). Insider/outsider perspectives. The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion. J. R. Hinnells. London and New York, Routledge (Taylor & Francis group): 243-258.
- Koenig, M. (2007). "Europeanising the governance of religious diversity: An institutionalist account of Muslim struggles for public recognition." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 33(6): 911-932.
- Kramer, G. and S. Schmidtke (2006). Introduction: Religious authority and religious authorities in Muslim societies. A critical overview.
- Kurzman, C. (1998). Liberal Islam: A Source Book, Oxford University Press.
- Kurzman, C. (2002). Modernist Islam 1840-1940: a Source Book. Oxford ; New York, Oxford University Press.
- L. Ali Khan, H. M. R. (2011). Contemporary Ijtihad: Limits and controversies. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Lambek, M. (1990). "Certain Knowledge, Contestable Authority - Power and Practice on The Islamic Periphery." American Ethnologist 17(1): 23-40.
- Lapidus, I. M. (1982). A history of Islamic societies Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Lewis, P. (1994). Islamic Britain: religion, politics, and identity among British Muslims ; Bradford in the 1990s. London, I.B. Tauris.

- Lewis, P. (1996). The Functions, Education and Influence of the 'Ulama in Bradford's Muslim Communities. Leeds, The University of Leeds.
- Lewis, P. (2007). British Muslims and the Search for Religious Guidance. In Religious Reconstruction in the South Asian Diasporas: From One Generation to Another. J. R. Hinnells. New York, Palgrave Macmillan: 29-50.
- Lewis, P. (2007). Young, British, and Muslim. London ; New York Continuum.
- Lewis, P. J. (1993). Bradford's Muslim communities and the reproduction and representation of Islam, Leeds University.
- Lowry, J. E. (2008). "The First Islamic Legal Theory: Ibn al-Muqaffa' on Interpretation, Authority, and the Structure of the Law." Journal of the American Oriental Society 128(1): 25-40.
- Madelung, W. (1985). Religious schools and sects in medieval Islam. London Variorum Reprints.
- Madelung, W. (2005). Imamate. Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition. L. Jones. USA, Thomson Gale. 7.
- Malik, H. (1980). Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Muslim modernization in India and Pakistan. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Mālik, i. A. (1951). al-Muwatta' / li-Mālik ibn Anas; sahhahah wa-raqqamah wa-kharraja ahādīthah wa-‘allaqa ‘alayhi Muhammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī. Cairo, Dār Iḥya' al-Kutub al-‘Arabīyah.
- Mandaville, P. (2007). "Globalization and the politics of religious knowledge - Pluralizing authority in the Muslim world." Theory Culture & Society 24(2): 101.
- Mandaville, P. (2009). "Muslim Transnational Identity and State Responses in Europe and the UK after 9/11: Political Community, Ideology and Authority." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 35(3): 491-506.

- Mandaville, P. G. (2007). Global political Islam. London, Routledge.
- Manger, L. (1999). Muslim Diversity: Local Islam in Global Contexts. Muslim Diversity: Local Islam in Global Contexts. L. Manger. Surrey, Curzon: 1-36.
- Marranci, G. (2010). Sociology and Anthropology of Islam: A Critical Debate. The new Blackwell companion to the sociology of religion. B. S. Turner. US, Wiley-Blackwell: 364-387.
- Marsden, M. (2007). "Islam, political authority and emotion in northern Pakistan." Contributions to Indian Sociology 41(1): 41-80.
- Masud, M. K. (2009). Islamic modernism. in Islam and modernity: key issues and debates. eds M. K. Masud et al.. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 237-260.
- Masud, M. K. (2009). The Changing Concepts of Caliphate-Social construction of Shari'a and the Questions of Ethics. in New Directions of Islamic Thought: exploring reform and Muslim tradition. L. L. a. C. M. Kari Vogt. London, I. B. Tauris: 187-206.
- Masud, M. K., A. Salvatore, et al., Eds. (2009). Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- McDonough, S. (1984). Muslim ethics and modernity: a comparative study of the ethical thought of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and Mawlana Mawdudi. Waterloo, Ont: Gerrards Cross, Published for the Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion by Wilfred Laurier University Press; Distributed by Smythe.
- McLoughlin, S. (1996). 'In the name of the umma: globalisation, 'race' relations and Muslim identity politics in Bradford' Political Participation and Identities of Muslims in Non-Muslim States. W. A. R. a. P. S. v. K. Shadid. Kampen, The Netherlands, Kok Pharos: 206-228.
- McLoughlin, S. (1997). 'Breaking in to bounded Britain': Discephant representations of belonging and Muslims in Bradford. PhD thesis, Manchester University, Faculty of Economic and Social Studies.

- McLoughlin, S. (2005a). Migration, Diaspora and transnationalism Transformations of religion and culture in a globalising age. In The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion. J. R. e. Hinnells. London, Routledge: 522-545.
- McLoughlin, S. (2005b). "Mosques and the Public Space: Conflict and Cooperation in Bradford." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 31(6): 1045-1066.
- McLoughlin, S. (2005c). The State, New Muslim Leaderships and Islam as a Resource for Public Engagement in Britain. In European Muslims and the secular state [for] the Network of Comparative Research on Islam and Muslims in Europe. J. Cesari and S. McLoughlin. Aldershot, Ashgate: 55-69.
- McLoughlin, S. (2007). "Islam(s) in context: Orientalism and the anthropology of Muslim societies and cultures." Journal of Beliefs & Values 28(3): 273-296.
- McLoughlin, S. and Abbas, T. (2010). United Kingdom. Yearbook of Muslims in Europe, Volume 2. J. S. N. Samim Akgönül, Ahmet Alibašić, Brigitte Maréchal and Christian Moe. Leiden, Brill.
- Meijer, R. (2009). Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement, Columbia University Press.
- Metcalf, B. D. (1989). Islamic revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900. Karachi, Royal Book Company.
- Metcalf, B. D. (1996). Making Muslim space in North America and Europe. Berkeley University of California Press.
- Metcalf, B. D. (2002). 'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs. Leiden Isim.
- Moaddel, M. (2005). Islamic modernism, nationalism, and fundamentalism: episode and discourse. Chicago, Ill. ; London, University of Chicago Press.
- Modood, T. (1992). British Asian Muslims and the Rushdie Affair. "Race", culture and difference. J. D. A. Rattansi. London, Sage Publications in association with the Open University: 139-156.

- Modood, T. (1997). Ethnic minorities in Britain : diversity and disadvantage. London, Policy Studies Institute.
- Modood, T. (2007). The construction of minority identities in France and Britain. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Modood, T. (2008). Secularism, religion, and multicultural citizenship. New York, Cambridge University Press.
- Modood, T. and Ahmed, F. (2007). "British Muslim Perspectives on Multiculturalism." Theory Culture Society Vol. 24(2): 187-213.
- Momen, M. (1985). An introduction to Shi'i Islam: the history and doctrines of Twelver Shi'ism. New Haven; London, Yale University Press.
- Moosa, E. (2009). Right and Wrong in Islam, John Wiley & Sons, Limited.
- Morey P. and Yaqin. A. (2011c). Framing Muslims: stereotyping and representation since 9/11 Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press.
- Muslim, i. a.-H. (1955). Jāmi' al-sahīh, Sahīh Muslim / lil-Imām Abī al-Husayn Muslim ibn al-Hajjāj al-Qushayrī al-Nisābūrī ; waqafa 'alā tab'ih wa-tahqīq nusūsih wa-tashīhih wa-tarqiyatih wa-'add kutbih wa-abwābih wa-ahādīthih wa-'allaqa 'alayh Mulakhasṣ sharh al-Imām al-Nawawī ma'a ziyādāt 'an a'immat al-lughah Muhammad Fu'ād 'Abd al-Bāqī al-Qāhirah, Dār Ihya' al-Kutub al-'Arabīyah,.
- Nasr, S. V. R. (1996). Mawdudi and the making of Islamic revivalism. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Nielsen, J. S. (2004). Muslims in Western Europe. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Parray, T. A. (2012). "The Legal Methodology of "Fiqh al-Aqalliyat" and its Critics: An Analytical Study " Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs 32(1): 88-107.

- Patel, P. (2011). "Cohesion, Multi-faithism and the Erosion of Secular Spaces in the UK: Implications for the Human Rights of Minority Women." Ids Bulletin-Institute of Development Studies 42(1): 26-40.
- Peek, L. (2005). "Becoming Muslim: The development of a religious identity." Sociology of Religion 66(3): 215-242.
- Peter, F. (2006). "Individualization and Religious Authority in Western European Islam." Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 17(1): 105–118.
- Philippon, A. (2011). "Sunnis Against Sunnis. The Politicization of Doctrinal Fractures in Pakistan." The Muslim World 101: 347-367.
- Poole, E. (2002). Reporting Islam: media representations of British Muslims. London, I.B. Tauris.
- Prideaux, M. J. (2008). Faiths Together? Muslim-Christian Co-Working on a Publicly Funded Project in Beeston Hill, South Leeds. PhD thesis, The University of Leeds.
- Rahman, F. (1970). "Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternatives." International Journal of Middle East Studies Vol. 1(no: 4): 317-333.
- Rahman, F. (1979). Islam. Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
- Rahman, F. (1982). Islam & modernity : transformation of an intellectual tradition. Chicago; London, University of Chicago Press.
- Ramadan, T. (1999). To be a European Muslim : a study of Islamic sources in the European context. Markfield, Leicester, Islamic Foundation.
- Ramadan, T. (2001). Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity, Islamic Foundation.
- Ramadan, T. (2005). Western Muslims and the Future of Islam, Oxford University Press, USA.

- Ramadan, T. (2008). Radical reform: Islamic ethics and liberation, Oxford University Press.
- Ramadan, T. and S. Amghar (2001). Islam, the West and the Challenges of Modernity, Islamic Foundation.
- Raza, M. S. (1993). Islam in Britain : past, present, and future Leicester, Volcano Press Ltd.
- Riddell, P. G. (2003). Islam and the Malay-Indonesian world: transmission and responses London, Hurst.
- Rippin, A. (2003). Muslims: their religious beliefs and practices. London, Routledge.
- Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalisation: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity Global Modernities. M. Featherstone, S. Lash and R. Robertson, SAGE Publications: 25-44.
- Robinson, F. (1988). Varieties of South Asian Islam. Coventry, Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick.
- Robinson, F. (2009). "Crisis of Authority: Crisis of Islam?" Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 19: 339-354.
- Roy, O. (1996). The Failure of Political Islam, Harvard University Press.
- Roy, O. (2004). Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah. New York, Columbia University Press.
- Saint-Blancat, C. (2004). "Transmission of Islam among the new generations of the Diaspora." Social Compass 51(2): 235-247.
- Salvatore, A. (2004). "Making public space: Opportunities and limits of collective action among Muslims in Europe." Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies 30(5): 1013-1031.
- Salvatore, A. (2006). "Power and authority within European secularity: From the Enlightenment critique of religion to the contemporary presence of Islam." The Muslim World 96(4): 543-561.

- Salvatore, A. (2007). "Authority in question - Secularity, republicanism and 'communitarianism' in the emerging Euro-Islamic public sphere." Theory Culture & Society 24(2): 135.
- Salvatore, A. (2009). The Reform Project in the Emerging Public Spheres. Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates. M. K. Masud, A. Salvatore; and M.V. Bruinessen. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press: 185-205.
- Salvatore, A. and S. Amir-Moazami (2002). "The transformation of Islam as a discursive tradition in colonial, post-colonial and European public spheres." Berliner Journal Fur Soziologie 12(3): 309.
- Sanyal, U. (1996). Devotional Islam and Politics in British India: Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi and His Movement, 1870-1920, Oxford University Press.
- Sanyal, U. (2005). Ahmad Riza Khan Barelwi: in the path of the Prophet. Oxford Oneworld.
- Sayyid, B. S. (1997). A fundamental fear : Eurocentrism and the emergence of Islamism. London, Zed.
- Schacht, J. (1960 [i.e. 1954]-2009). idjtihad. The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition. H. A. R. Gibb. Leiden, Brill. 3: 1026-1027.
- Sedgwick, M. (2006). Islam & Muslims, A Guide to Diverse Experience in a Modern World. Boston, London, Intercultural Press.
- Shah, Z. A. (2009). The Astronomical Calculations and Ramadan: A Fiqhi Discourse. London, New York The International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Shaw, A. (1988). A Pakistani community in Britain. Oxford, Blackwell.
- Shepard, W. (2004). The Diversity Of Islamic Thought: Towards A Typology. Islamic Thought In The Twentieth Century. S. T.-F. a. B. M. Nafi. London, I.B. Tauris: 61-103.

- Siddiqui, A. (2004c). Muslim Youth in Britain: Cultural and Religious Conflict in Perspective. Muslims in Europe : from the margin to the centre. J. Malik. Münster, Lit Verlag: 49-59.
- Sirriyeh, E. (1999). Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defense, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World, Curzon.
- Slyomovics, S. (1996). The Muslim World Day Parade and "Storefront" Mosques of New York City. In Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe. B. D. Metcalf. London, University of California Press: 204-216.
- Sperl, S. (1977). "Islamic Kingship and Arabic Panegyric Poetry in The Early 9th-Century + Portrayal of the Authority of The Sovereign in both Islamic and Non-Islamic Terms During Abbasid Times." Journal of Arabic Literature 8: 20-35.
- Spickard, J. V., J. S. Landres, et al. (2002). Personal knowledge and beyond: reshaping the ethnography of religion, New York University Press.
- Statham, P., R. Koopmans, et al. (2005). "Resilient or adaptable Islam? Multiculturalism, religion and migrants' claims-making for group demands in Britain, the Netherlands and France." Ethnicities 5(4): 427-459.
- Suleiman, Y. (2009). Contextualising Islam in Britain: Exploratory Perspectives. University of Cambridge in association with the universities of Exeter and Westminster. Y. Suleiman. Cambridge, Centre of Islamic Studies.
- Taji-Farouki, S. (1996). A fundamental quest: Hizb al-Tahrir and the search for the Islamic Caliphate. London, Grey Seal.
- Taji-Farouki, S. and B. M. Nafi, Ed. (2004). Islamic thought in the twentieth century. London, I. B. Tauris.
- Tamir, A. (1990). Mu'jam al-firaq al-Islāmiyah / 'Arif Tāmir. Bayrūt, Dār al-Masīrah.

- Thanwi, A. A. (2007). Bahishti Zewar (Heavenly Ornaments). South Africa, Zam Zam Publishers.
- The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition. 2009. s.v. Fatwa.
- The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition. 2009. s.v. Idjtihad.
- Tibi, B. (2009). Islam's predicament with modernity: religious reform and cultural change. London; New York, NY, Routledge.
- Tölölyan, K. (1996). "Rethinking diaspora(s): Stateless power in the transnational moment." Diaspora 5(1): 3-36.
- Troll, C. W. (1978). Sayyid Ahmad Khan: a reinterpretation of Muslim theology New Delhi, Vikas Publ. House.
- Turner, B. S. (2007). "Religious authority and the new media." Theory Culture & Society 24(2): 117.
- Turner, B. S., Ed. (2010). The new Blackwell companion to the sociology of religion. US, Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ünal, A. (2007). The Qur'an with Annotated Interpretation in Modern English, New Jersey, The Light.
- Understanding and Appreciating Muslim Diversity: Towards better Engagement and Participation. 2008. Coventry: Institute of Community Cohesion
- Usmani, M. T. (2006). The legal status of following a madhab. Karachi, Zam Zam Publishers.
- Vertovec, S. (1999). "Three meanings of 'Diaspora', exemplified among South Asian religions." Diaspora 7(2)
- Vertovec, S. (2000). The Hindu Diaspora: Comparative Patterns, Routledge Chapman & Hall.
- Voll, J. O. (1994). Islam: continuity and change in the modern world. New York, Syracuse University Press.

- Volpi, F. and B. S. Turner (2007). "Making Islamic authority matter - Introduction." Theory Culture & Society 24(2): 1.
- Waardenburg, J. (2002). Islam: Historical, Social, and Political Perspectives. Berlin, New York, Walter de Gruyter.
- Walsh, J. R. (1960 [i.e. 1954]-2009). fatwa. The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New edition. H. A. R. Gibb. Leiden, Brill. 2.
- Weiss, B. G. (2005). ijtiḥād. Encyclopedia of Religion, Second Edition. L. Jones. USA, Thomson Gale. 7: 4373-4375.
- Werbner, P. (2002). The Migration Process: Capital, Gifts and Offerings Among British Pakistanis, Berg Publishers.
- Werbner, P. a. A., M. (1991). Black and Ethnic Leaderships in Britain: The Cultural Dimensions of Political Action. London, Routledge.
- Wiktorowicz, Q. (2005). Radical Islam rising: Muslim extremism in the West Lanham, Md. , Rowman & Littlefield.
- Williams, R. (2008). "Muslim-Christian Dialogue in Britain and Beyond A lecture given at Al-Hamra Hall, Lahore 23 November 2005." Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations 19(3): 333-338.
- Yücel, İ. (1998). Hilal. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi (Turkish Religious Foundation Encyclopaedia of Islam). Committee. İstanbul, Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı. 18. Cilt (Hilal - Hüseyin Lamekani): 1-11.
- Zaman, M. Q. (2006). Consensus and Religious Authority in Modern Islam: The Discourses of the 'Ulamà'. Speaking for Islam: Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies. G. K. a. S. Schmidtke. Leiden, Boston, Brill: 153-180.
- Zaman, M. Q. (2009). The Ulama and Contestations on Religious Authority. Islam and Modernity: Key Issues and Debates. M. Q. Zaman; A. Salvatore, and M. V. Bruinessen. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press: 206-236.

Zubaida, S. (2009). Political Modernity. Islam and modernity: key issues and debates. M. Q. Zaman; A. Salvatore, and M. V. Bruinessen. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press: 57-88.

List of abbreviations

BCM:	Bradford Council for Mosques
BMF:	British Muslim Forum
CRP:	Community Religions Project
ECFR:	European Council for Fatwa and Research
HT:	Hizb ut-Tahrir
IC:	Leeds Iqra Centre
IF:	The Islamic Foundation
JI:	Jamaati Islami
JIMAS:	Jam'iyat Ihya' Minhaj al-Sunnah
LGM:	Leeds Grand Mosque
LIC:	Leeds Islamic Centre
LMF:	Leeds Muslim Forum
LMI:	Liverpool Mosque and Institute
LMM:	Leeds Makkah Masjid
MAB:	Muslim Association of Britain
MB:	Muslim Brotherhood

MCB:	Muslim Council of Britain
MET:	The Muslim Educational Trust
MIHE:	Markfield Institute for Higher Education
MINAB:	Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board
PBUH:	Peace Be Upon Him
PMA:	The Pakistan Muslim Association
TJ:	Tablighi Jama'at
UK:	United Kingdom
UKACIA:	The UK Action Committee on Islamic Affairs
UKIM:	United Kingdom Islamic Mission
UMO:	The Union of Muslim Organisations of the UK and Eire
YMUK:	Young Muslims UK

A note on transliteration

I use the transliteration of Arabic according to current usage in the relevant literature as simply as possible to prevent any confusion. The only attempt to Arabicize the transliteration in the text itself, however, is the presence of the right facing apostrophe (‘) referring to the letter ‘ayn (ع - e.g. *shari‘a*) and the left facing apostrophe (’) referring to the letter *hamza* (ء - e.g. Qur’an). Other letters such as غ – gh (*ghayb*); ث – th (*hadith*); خ - kh (*khutbah*); ذ – dh (*dhikr*); and ش – sh (*sheikh*) have been used as counterpart in English in such way. I italicise the foreign names that are followed immediately by the English equivalent in brackets. Or, if I use technical terms in English, I put the Arabic term in brackets.

Urdu versions of religious terms originally come from Arabic, such as *zikr*, I prefer to use Arabic counterpart in English as aforementioned word *dhikr* unless quoting from the literature. Persian and Urdu names have been used less throughout the thesis compared to Arabic. *Namaz*, *kasbah*, and *urs* are for example. Regarding pluralising the terms I use both adding the letter ‘s’ at the end of Arabic word, such as *fatwas*, and Arabic plural form like *fatawa*. But I refrain from adding the letter ‘s’ to some words like *hadith* which create problems in pronouncing it. I use the word *sheikh* for mosque imam, by contrast the word of *shaykh* for a sufi pir.

Glossary

<i>'alim</i>	scholar
<i>'ulama</i>	plural form of scholar
<i>'isha</i>	the last prayer of the day after about 2 hours sunset
<i>'urf</i>	custom
<i>'amal</i>	deed
<i>'adala</i>	justice
<i>adha</i>	Sacrifice
<i>adhan</i>	call for prayer
<i>adilla</i>	proof
<i>adille-i Shari'a</i>	the proofs of Law
<i>ahadith</i>	the plural form of <i>hadith</i>
<i>ahl al-sunnat wa'l Jama'at</i>	people and community of the prophetic path
<i>ahl-e Hadith</i>	the people who follow the sayings of the Prophet
<i>al-ahkam</i>	legal verdicts
<i>ahwal an-nas</i>	the state of people
<i>akhlaq</i>	moral

<i>al-Muhajirun</i>	the immigrants
<i>Amir</i>	leader
<i>'aql</i>	reason/logic
<i>asbab</i>	reasons
<i>'asr</i>	afternoon prayer
<i>awliya</i>	the Sufi saints or friends (of Allah)
<i>'ayat/ayah</i>	A Qur'anic verse
<i>bayan</i>	conference/seminar
<i>bid'ah</i>	innovation
<i>da'wah</i>	mission
<i>daiyah</i>	preacher
<i>dar al- 'ulum</i>	religious seminar/school
<i>dars-i nizami</i>	the syllabus of Farangi Mahall in the 18 th century India
<i>daruriyyat</i>	necessities
<i>dhikr</i>	remembrance of Allah
<i>dhuhr/ duhr</i>	noon prayer
<i>Dhul-Hijjah</i>	the 12 th month of the Islamic calendar

<i>du‘a</i>	pray
<i>durud sharif</i>	an invocation which Muslims make by saying specific phrases to tribute Prophet Muhammad
<i>‘eid al-adha</i>	Sacrifice feast
<i>‘eid al-fitr</i>	Ramadan feast
<i>‘eid</i>	feast
<i>fajr</i>	pre-dawn prayer in a day
<i>fard</i>	compulsory
<i>fatawa</i>	legal rulings, plural form of <i>fatwa</i>
<i>fatwa jama‘iyya</i>	collective legal ruling
<i>fatwa</i>	legal opinion
<i>fiqh</i>	jurisprudence
<i>fiqhi</i>	jurisprudential
<i>hadith</i>	the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>hafiz</i>	someone who has memorised the entire Qur’an by heart
<i>hajiyyat</i>	the needs
<i>hajj</i>	pilgrimage

<i>halal</i>	allowed
<i>halaqatu't-tafseer</i>	Qur'anic exegesis circle
<i>haram</i>	forbidden
<i>hazir u nazir</i>	present and observant
<i>hifz</i>	to memorise
<i>ibadat</i>	religious practices
<i>ifta</i>	the act of issuing a legal opinion
<i>ijazah</i>	a graduation certificate given to the student in traditional religious education
<i>ijma</i>	consensus
<i>ijtihad jama'i</i>	collective effort to derive rulings from the sources of Islam
<i>ijtihad</i>	individual 'effort' in deriving interpretations in Islamic law
<i>ikhlas</i>	sincerity
<i>ikhtilaf-e matali'</i>	diversity of horizons
<i>Ikhwanu'l Muslimin</i>	the Muslim Brothers
<i>'ilm</i>	knowledge

<i>'ilmu'l-ghayb</i>	the knowledge of unseen
<i>imam</i>	religious leader or someone leading to prayer in a mosque
<i>isnad</i>	the chain of transmitters of a hadith
<i>istihsan</i>	a process of legal preference
<i>istislah</i>	seeking the greater benefit to act on public interest
<i>istishab</i>	presumption of continuity
<i>ittiba</i>	to obey and follow
<i>Jahiliyyah</i>	ignorance
<i>janaza</i>	funeral
<i>jum'ah khutbah</i>	Friday sermon
<i>jum'ah</i>	Friday
<i>kalam</i>	word or theology
<i>kasbah</i>	town
<i>khalifa</i>	vice-regent
<i>khaliq</i>	the creator
<i>khutbah</i>	sermon
<i>kufr</i>	disbelief

<i>ma'qulat</i>	the rational studies
<i>madhab</i>	the path/method
<i>madhahib</i>	the plural form of <i>madhab</i>
<i>madrassa</i>	school
<i>maghrib</i>	sunset prayer
<i>majlis</i>	assembly
<i>makatib</i>	schools
<i>makhluq</i>	creation
<i>manqulat</i>	the studies of Qur'an and Hadith
<i>maqasid al-Shari'a</i>	the aims of Islamic law
<i>maqbara-e pir</i>	A sufi leader's grave
<i>masjid</i>	mosque
<i>maslaha</i>	common good
<i>maslak</i>	theological position
<i>mawlana</i>	a religious leader or mosque imam
<i>mawlid/milad</i>	birthday
<i>milad un-Nabi</i>	the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad

<i>mu‘amalat</i>	social transactions
<i>mufti</i>	a qualified scholar who issues legal opinions
<i>mujaddid</i>	reviver
<i>mujtahid</i>	a qualified scholar who exercises <i>ijtihad</i>
<i>muqallid</i>	follower of a particular school of law
<i>muqayyad</i>	limited by a restriction
<i>mushrik</i>	someone who attributes a partner to Allah
<i>mutakallim</i>	speaker
<i>nafil</i>	not compulsory
<i>najm</i>	star
<i>namaz</i>	prayer
<i>namaz</i>	prayer
<i>nass</i>	source, the Qur’an and Sunnah
<i>nikah</i>	marriage
<i>pirs</i>	Sufi masters
<i>qari</i>	someone recites Qur’anic verses or poems
<i>qiyam</i>	stand up position during prayer

<i>qiyas</i>	reasoning by analogy
<i>Rabi'ul-Awwal</i>	the first month in Islamic calendar
<i>rahbar</i>	guide
<i>rahmah</i>	blessing
<i>rak'ah</i>	a series of ritual movements which form a part of the prayer
<i>Ramadan</i>	the ninth month in Islamic calendar in which Muslim fast
<i>ru'yati hilal</i>	observing the new moon
<i>sadaqa</i>	charity
<i>sahabah</i>	the friends/companions of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>sajdah</i>	prostration
<i>salaf</i>	the predecessor
<i>salaf'u salihin</i>	the rightly predecessors
<i>salam</i>	greeting
<i>salat</i>	prayer/worshipping
<i>salat o salam</i>	greetings and prayers
<i>sawm</i>	fasting, especially during Ramadan

<i>Sha 'ban</i>	the eighth month of the Islamic calendar
<i>Shari 'a</i>	Islamic Law
<i>Sheikh al-Islam</i>	the grand religious leader
<i>sheikh</i>	mosque imam or sufi leader
<i>shirk</i>	associating Allah with someone or something
<i>shu 'ra</i>	consultation
<i>shurut</i>	conditions
<i>sirah</i>	the biography of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>Sunnah</i>	the acts, sayings, and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad
<i>Sunni</i>	the main branch of Islam
<i>tafseer</i>	Qur'anic exegesis
<i>tahsiniyyat</i>	embellishments in Islamic rulings
<i>tajweed</i>	to pronounce and read Qur'an properly
<i>takfir</i>	to blame someone for being infidel
<i>tamsil</i>	to represent
<i>taqlid</i>	to follow/imitate a path or someone

<i>tarawih</i>	a <i>sunnah</i> prayer up to 20 <i>rak'ah</i> performed during Ramadan nights after <i>ish'a</i> prayer
<i>tarbiyah</i>	training
<i>tariqat</i>	Sufi Orders
<i>tasawwuf</i>	Sufi way of life
<i>tawassul</i>	supplicating Allah through an intermediary
<i>'ulama</i>	scholars
<i>ummah</i>	universal Muslim community
<i>urs</i>	death anniversary
<i>usul</i>	methodology
<i>usul al-fiqh</i>	methodology of Islamic jurisprudence
<i>va'z</i>	religious advice
<i>waqf</i>	religious endowment
<i>wasatiyya</i>	to be in the middle in behaviour, etc.
<i>wudu'</i>	ablution
<i>zakah</i>	alms-giving, one of the five pillars of Islam
<u><i>zilal</i></u>	shades

Appendix A: Sample Interview Schedule for Masjid

Attendees

Name (if applicable):

Nationality:

Country:

Gender: Male/ Female

Age:

Length of time being in the UK:

Occupation:

Education level:

1. What do you think about general conditions of Muslims in contemporary world in terms of religious belief and practices, ie applying the religion to social life?

2. There is a main division within Islam in terms of faith and practice: Sunni and Shi'i. In Sunni branch of Islam, four well-known madhahib, namely Hanafiyya, Shafi'iyya, Malikiyya, and Hanbaliyya, are followed (taqlid) by many Muslims in practice.
 - A. Which scholar's methodology within ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaah, do you follow in faith matters, Islamic theology?
 - a) Imam Ash'ari
 - b) Imam Maturidi
 - c) Other

d) None

B. Which Islamic school of thought do you follow in practice (a'mal and ibadat)?

a) Hanafiyya

b) Shafi'iyya

c) Malikiyya

d) Hanbaliyya

e) None of the above

f) Not necessary follow any of them

g) More than one:

3. What is the reason for you to follow this school of thought? (if answered any of first four options in the previous question)

a) It is common madhab in my country (national and local area).

b) It was taught to me by my parents, teacher, etc.

c) I chose the madhab (.....) after a comprehensive research that it answered my needs more accurate other than three school of thoughts.

d) None of the above, please specify?

4. What do you think about such diversity mentioned above within Sunni Muslim community?

5. Is it necessary to follow any of these schools of thought in contemporary world, in which human-being can easily access every kind of knowledge?

Yes / No Why? / Why not?

6. Which jama'at/organisation do you belong to or how do you describe yourself within Sunni branch of Islam in Britain?
- a) Deobandi
 - b) Barelwi
 - c) Salafi
 - d) Wahhabi
 - e) Ahl-e Hadith
 - f) Jama'at-i Islami
 - g) Tabligh-i Jama'at
 - h) Muslim Brotherhood
 - i) Other.....
7. Do you have any idea about main areas of agreement and disagreement among these groups, could you give examples in top three or four main issues?
8. The prophet (pbuh) said: "Difference in my community is blessing." Do you think it is good for Muslim community having such diversity at the moment?
9. What does it mean to be a Sunni Muslim?
10. Do you think intra-Muslim dialogue within not only Sunni Islam, but also between Sunni and Shi'i Islam should be made in Britain, where all religious differences and feelings are accommodated?

11. What do you think about living in a non-Muslim country in terms of applying religious belief and practices to social life? To what extent, do you feel more freedom or how do you compare your home country with Britain for these matters?
12. What are the main challenges for Muslims face in terms of religious belief and practices in the UK?

- Secular society
- Plural, multi-ethnic society
- Liberal, democratic

13. What is the advantage and disadvantage of living as a Muslim in Britain?

Advantages	Disadvantages

14. What is your attitude towards non-Muslims in social life, e.g at work, neighbouring, friendship?

15. Do you think interfaith dialogue (it refers to communicate with other religious traditions in order to work for common good, positive interaction, and cooperation) should be

- a) Permitted, why?
- b) Forbidden, why?
- c) Encouraged, why?

16. What sort of people must be involved in inter-faith dialogue?

- a) Religious leaders
- b) People who are in religious posts
- c) Everyone

17. Have you noticed any differences in the implementation of the rituals (combining two prayers, etc.) when you pray in this mosque? Could you give an example(s), please? *Or are you aware of other Madhab's different practice ways in rituals?*

- Why is there such difference?
- Is it a problem?

18. When you stand behind an imam (leading to prayer) who follows another sect, how do you feel about yourself and what do you think about your prayer whether accepted or not?

19. How often do you come across any problem regarding faith and practices?

- a) Daily
- b) From time to time
- c) Never
- d) Occasionally (.....)

20. What sources of advice and legal opinions (fatawa) are you aware of about religious practices and other social matters in the context of Britain?

21. Who/What do you apply or consult when you come across any problem regarding faith and practice?

- a) Local mosque imam
- b) Shaikh
- c) Shari'a council
- d) European Council for Fatwa and Research
- e) An Islamic website
- f) A religious expert in home country
- g) Other.....

22. How do you get fatwas from any of above places, and what is the procedure to get fatwa? After getting fatwa, do you search another authority to make sure you have got right fatwa?

23. Do you advise your method of getting fatwa to somebody else, why?

24. How important is it to have a fatwa? In your opinion, is this a concern for
- a) All muslims
 - b) Most Muslims
 - c) A minority
 - d) Very few
25. Do you think religious experts should produce a new methodology in Islamic law in order to meet the needs of Muslim society in Britain? For example, about financial matters such as bank interest, mortgage...or any other matters like citizenship under British state...for example, Prof. Yasir Suleiman argues that citizenship a contract between individual and the state, and he sees that it is identical with Bay'ah in Islamic context. What do you think about that?
26. "To bear witness to human kind" a verse from the Qur'an is interpreted by one of contemporary Muslim academics (Tariq Ramadan) that active role of every Muslim living in Europe in terms of representing Islam as the best example, before other humans, non-Muslim governments, and society. What do you think about current Muslim representation in Britain?

Appendix B: Sample Interview Schedule for Mosque Imams and Religious Experts

Name (if applicable):

Nationality:

Country:

Gender: Male/ Female

Age:

Length of time being in the UK:

Occupation:

Education level:

How do you describe yourself?

**Imam b) Sheikh c) Mufti d) Alim e) Academician f) researcher in
Islamic studies g) Other (.....)**

1. What do you think about general conditions of Muslims in contemporary world in terms of religious belief and practices?

2. In your opinion, how the terms of “dar al-Muslim” (land of Muslim) and “dar al harb” (land of non-Muslim) should be interpreted?

3. There is a main division within Islam in terms of faith and practice: Sunni and Shi’i. In Sunni branch of Islam, four well-known madhahib, namely Hanafiyya, Shafi’iyya, Malikiyya, and Hanbaliyya, are followed (taqlid) by many Muslims in practice.

C. Which scholar's methodology within ahl as-Sunnah wa'l-Jamaah, do you follow in faith matters, Islamic theology?

- e) Imam Ash'ari
- f) Imam Maturidi
- g) Other
- h) None

D. Which Islamic school of thought do you follow in practice (a'mal and ibadat)?

- h) Hanafiyya
- i) Shafi'iyya
- j) Malikiyya
- k) Hanbaliyya
- l) None of the above
- m) Not necessary follow any of them
- n) More than one:

4. What is the reason for you to follow this school of thought? (if answered any of first four options in the previous question)

- e) It is common madhab in my country (national and local area).
- f) It was taught to me by my parents, teacher, etc.
- g) I chose the madhab (.....) after a comprehensive research that it answered my needs more accurate other than three schools of thought.
- h) None of the above, please specify?

5. What do you think about such diversity mentioned above within Sunni Muslim community?

6. Is it necessary to follow any of these schools of thought in contemporary world, in which human-being can easily access every kind of knowledge?

Yes / No Why? / Why not?

7. Which jama'at/organisation do you belong to or how do you describe yourself within Sunni branch of Islam?

j) Deobandi

k) Bareilwi

l) Salafi

m) Wahhabi

n) Ahl-e Hadith movement

o) Jama'at-i Islami

p) Tabligh-i Jama'at

q) Muslim Brotherhood

r) Other.....

8. Do you have any idea about main areas of agreement and disagreement among these groups, could you give examples in top three or four main issues?

9. The prophet (pbuh) said: "Difference in my community is a blessing." Do you think it is good for Muslim community having such diversity at the moment?

10. What does it mean to be a Sunni Muslim?

11. Do you think intra-Muslim dialogue within not only Sunni Islam, but also between Sunni and Shi'i Islam should be made in Britain, where all religious differences and feelings are accommodated?
12. What do you think about living in a non-Muslim country in terms of applying religious belief and practices to social life? To what extent, do you feel more freedom or how do you compare your home country with Britain for these matters?
13. What are the main challenges for Muslims in terms of belief and practices in the UK?
14. What is the advantage and disadvantage of living in Britain?

Advantages	Disadvantages

15. What is your attitude towards non-Muslims in social life, e.g at work, neighbouring, friendship?
16. Do you think interfaith dialogue (it refers to communicate with other religious traditions in order to work for common good, positive interaction, and cooperation) should be

- d) Permitted, why?
- e) Forbidden, why?
- f) Encouraged, why?

17. What sort of people must be involved in inter-faith dialogue?

- a) Religious leaders
- b) People who are in religious posts
- c) Everyone

18. Have you noticed any differences in the implementation of the rituals when you pray in this mosque? Could you give an example(s), please?

- Why is there such difference?
- Is it a problem?

19. When you stand behind an imam who follows another school of thought, how do you feel about yourself and what do you think about your prayer whether accepted or not?

20. How often do you come across people who ask for fatwa regarding faith and practices?

- e) Daily
- f) From time to time
- g) Never
- h) Occasionally (.....)

21. How important is it to give a fatwa in a special matter such as family law, marriage, divorce, etc?
22. In your opinion, is this a concern for
- a) All Muslims
 - b) Most Muslims
 - c) A minority
 - d) Very few
23. In contemporary era, how a religious expert or mujtahid should be, and what kind of status should be given to the religious expert so that mujtahid can be more effective in this religious role?
24. Do you think religious experts should produce a new methodology in Islamic law in order to meet the needs of Muslim society in Britain? For example, about financial matters such as bank interest, mortgage...or any other matters like citizenship under British state...
25. In what matters do other Muslims consult you to get a fatwa and what is the order of these if we align them descending from the most popular?
- Family (Marriage, divorce, guidance for responsibilities and rights)
 - Faith and practice (iman, ibadet, akhlaq)
 - Financial
 - Political

- Social

26. Nowadays, in a globalised world, Muslims probably need much more intra-dialogue amongst themselves compared with the past. In your opinion, how do Muslims manage that?
27. To name another Muslim as traditionalist, reformist, modernist, liberal, etc. is common in academic milieu and on the media. Do you think such naming is another division within Muslim community or is that a kind of classification to identify different types of Muslims in contemporary era?
28. How would you describe or classify Muslims in Britain?
29. How could Muslim scholars in Europe, particularly in the UK, contribute to Islamic heritage in terms of producing new methodology and solutions to current problems?
30. What do you think about current Muslim identity, representation in Britain?
31. Recently, Muslims have celebrated eid al-Adha. However, some of them accepted the first day of the eid, 16th of November, Tuesday; on the contrary some others agreed to celebrate on 17th of November, Wednesday as the first day of eid al-Adha. What do you think about that?

32. What can be done for Muslim unity (wahdet-i ummet) or “ecumenism” in Islamic faith and practices?

33. What can be done to prevent such disagreement mentioned above?

- a) Should umbrella organisations such as Organisation of Islam Conference, and Muslim World League undertake to schedule on the same date for whole Muslim community?
- b) In the UK context, what can be done with Muslim organisations at local and national level (Leeds Muslim Forum, MCB, SMB, and MINAB etc.) to be unanimous at religious faith and practices?

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Title of Research Project: Sunni Muslim Religiosity in the UK Muslim Diaspora:
Mosques in Leeds Compared

Name of Researcher: Aydin Bayram

Initial the box if you agree with the statement to the left

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated, 15 December 2010, explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project. | <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid blue;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without there being any negative consequences. In addition, should I not wish to answer any particular question or questions, I am free to decline. <i>Insert contact number here of lead researcher/member of research team (as appropriate).</i> | <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid blue;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | I understand that my responses will be kept strictly confidential. I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses. I understand that my name will not be linked with the research materials, and I will not be identified or identifiable in the report or reports that result from the research. | <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid blue;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | I agree for the data collected from me to be used in future research | <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid blue;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 | I agree to take part in the above research project and will inform the principal investigator should my contact details change. | <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid blue;" type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 | I agree to give my permission for the researcher to record audio voices during the interview and use accordingly as mentioned in the information sheet. | <input style="width: 50px; height: 30px; border: 1px solid blue;" type="checkbox"/> |

Name of participant
(or legal representative)

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent
(if different from lead researcher)

Date

Signature

To be signed and dated in presence of the participant

Lead researcher	Date	Signature
<i>To be signed and dated in presence of the participant</i>		

Copies:

Once this has been signed by all parties the participant should receive a copy of the signed and dated participant consent form, the letter/pre-written script/information sheet and any other written information provided to the participants. A copy of the signed and dated consent form should be kept with the project's main documents which must be kept in a secure location.

Appendix D: Information Sheet

15 December 2010

Research Project Title:

Sunni Muslim Religiosity in the UK Muslim Diaspora: Mosques in Leeds Compared

You are being invited to take part in a research project mentioned above. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. Thank you for reading this.

What is the project's purpose?

Sunni Muslim religiosity including religious life, belief and practices of British-Muslims of different schools of thought and ethnic backgrounds are my main concerns. In the media, the Muslim minority is usually considered in terms of outsider's concerns with political, social, economic, and ideological issues. However, in my case, as a Muslim insider, I am more interested in the reality of how Muslims live in a non-Muslim society, the implementation of Islamic law in daily life, whether in terms of ritual, commercial law, family relations, and so on.

Why have I been chosen?

You are randomly chosen to participate in this project. About nine more participants in this mosque/community will be chosen for this research project.

Do I have to take part?

Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary and is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep (and be asked to sign a consent form) and you can still withdraw at any time. You do not have to give a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be interviewed by the researcher who already prepared some questions (both open and close answers) on religiosity. The interview normally takes about one hour and it might be longer or shorter in parallel to your answers.

Will I be recorded, and how will the recorded media be used?

The audio recordings of your activities made during the interview will be used only for analysis and for illustration in conference presentations and lectures after transcribing them into text, and all quotations will be anonymised. No other use will be made of them without your written permission, and no one outside the project will be allowed access to the original recordings. After submitting the thesis, all voice recording will be destroyed. You will not be identified by the mosque committee, or the attendees in the mosque.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will contribute more accurate understandings about Muslims in the UK.

Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential. You will not be able to be identified in any reports or publications.

What type of information will be sought from me and why is the collection of this information relevant for achieving the research project's objectives?

I am comparing similarities and differences among Sunni Muslims in the UK, in terms of religiosity. My aim is to illustrate views and opinions from ordinary and expert Muslims in contemporary era.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results will be analysed and published as PhD thesis, then it would be basic or beneficial for further research about Islamic diversity.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am a scholarship student sent by Turkish Ministry of National Education.

Contact for further information:

Aydin Bayram

Department of Theology and Religious Studies

University of Leeds

LS2 9JT

Email: tr07ab@leeds.ac.uk

Tel. no: 07525483717

Thank you very much for taking part in this project.

Note: the participant will be given a copy of the information sheet and, if appropriate, a signed consent form to keep.

Appendix E: Permission Letter to the Mosque

Committees

Aydin Bayram

Department of Theology and Religious Studies

University of Leeds

LS2 9JT

Email: tr07ab@leeds.ac.uk

Tel. no: 07525483717

26/04/2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

I am currently a postgraduate research student at the department of Theology and Religious Studies, University of Leeds. I have MA degree in Religion and Public Life from the same university having come to Leeds from Turkey during 2007. I am generally interested in Islamic law and the history of different schools of theology having gained my undergraduate education at divinity school (Shari'a Faculty) in Erzurum. I was also a mosque-imam in Turkey before coming to the UK.

In terms of my current research, the religious life, belief and practices of British-Muslims of different schools of thought and ethnic backgrounds are my main concerns. In the media, the Muslim minority is usually considered in terms of outsider's concerns with political, social, economic, and ideological issues. However, in my case, as a Muslim insider, I am more interested in the reality of how Muslims live in a non-Muslim society, the implementation of Islamic law in daily life, whether in terms of ritual, commercial law, family relations, and so on.

All information given will be confidential, and if any material is quoted in writing, names will be changed to keep the information anonymous. I will only

discuss the interviews with my tutor at Leeds University, who would also be committed to confidentiality and would be happy to meet with you to assure you about the ethical nature of this research. Hopefully, I will contribute to more accurate understanding about Muslims in the West, with the permission of Allah. If you assist to me in this process, may Allah be pleased with you. I would be happy to answer any questions you have and in the first instance can be contacted by telephone, email or post as directed at the beginning of my correspondence.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Aydin Bayram