

MAKING A PLACE FOR ISLAM IN BRITISH SOCIETY:  
MUSLIMS IN BIRMINGHAM

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- a study of Islam in Birmingham -  
research on Refugees in Europe

## Abstract

This paper shows that Muslims in Britain have established the structures which make possible the practice and preservation of Islam for first and second generation Muslims. A map of Islam in Birmingham outlines the main branches characteristic of Muslims from the Indian subcontinent. An analysis of the roles and activities of the mosques reveal the thriving development of Islam, its ideological tenets, the main issues of concern for Muslims living in a non-Muslim country and their efforts to make inroads into British institutions; in other words it illustrates how a place for Islam is being made within British society.

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### **Introduction**

Islam came to Britain in a very recent period. The only previous experience Britain had of Muslims in the relatively recent past had been through its empire, and it remained impervious to the influence of Muslim culture. Nothing had prepared the British Society to give a home to a strong nucleus of Muslims forming communities in some of its major cities.

Britain is primarily a Christian Protestant society; this is enshrined in the composition of its institutions whereby state and church are not separated. The Queen of England is both the head of the state and the head of the Church. This manifests itself in multiple facets of British society, such as the education system which makes religious education compulsory, a court of law where it is customary to take the oath on the Bible, in church,

where a priest can celebrate marriages which are legally recognised. These are only a few examples which serve to illustrate the Christian foundations of British society. Moreover, as in most countries which possessed an empire, Britain does not have a tradition of religious or cultural tolerance of non-Christian outsiders. The past persecution of the Jews and today's prevalent racism bear witness to this.

Paradoxically, the arrival of Islam in Britain took place after the dismantling of the empire in the post second world war era, when the economic boom demanded the import of labour which came mostly from ex-colonies. At first, no notice was taken of the introduction of new cultures and religions on British territory. The immigrants themselves initially intended to live in Britain only temporarily and thereafter return home. But as immigrant populations became settled, the Muslims rebuilt their religious institutions and increasingly felt that their religious status and rights ought to be recognised, in order to preserve their religion and culture in a minority situation. It is not simply the predominance of another religion which caused concern to Muslims; they wanted to safeguard Islam from the growing secularisation of British society.

This paper seeks to show how Muslims are trying to make a place for Islam in Britain, taking Birmingham as a case study. It is based on research carried out in the last two years in the Midlands. It included lengthy interviews with the leaders of mosques, councillors and headteachers, participant observation in the activities of the mosques and the results of a questionnaire which was answered by three quarters of Pakistani-based mosques. The questionnaire covered areas such as the aims and objectives of the mosque, the composition of the mosque leadership and staffing, of the people attending Friday prayer, and the mosque activities, particularly in the field of education.

**Part One**

I Statistical summary on Muslims

Muslims made their first appearance in Britain, in the wake of the world wars, the majority arriving after the second world war, in the shape of demobilised colonial soldiers from the Indian subcontinent and the Arab peninsula.

The economic boom of the fifties in Britain, then short of labour, combined with turmoils in the "empire" attracted a flow of immigrant workers from the Indian subcontinent. Most of them were young, single men who came to work in Britain with the intention of returning home "rich" after saving sufficient money to buy property in the homeland. It did not happen as planned. Whilst *this* immigration increased steadily, initially bringing over more and more male members of the family or/and the village, in a chain migration, its composition changed. The restrictions on immigration imposed in 1962 and 1968 *limited* entry almost completely to family reunion: wives and children joined the male head of the family already *resident* in Britain (Nielsen 1984). This population lost its temporary character and became settled as a stable feature of *British* society.

Statistics on Muslims *living* in Britain pose a problem as there is no statistical data on Muslims ~ obtainable from the census of population. And other sources are incomplete or unreliable (Nielsen 1984). It is possible however to formulate an estimate of the Muslim population on the *basis* of data on country of *birth* or country of *origin*. The latest census (1981) identifies 398,624 residents born in countries where Islam is the main religion, that is 0.0796 of the total population in Britain. The figures below *describe* the distribution by country of origin.

Pakistan	188,198
Bangladesh	48,517
Malaysia	45,430
Algeria	2,417
Egypt	23,463
Libya	6,004
Morocco	5,818
Tunisia	2,037
Iran	28,068
Middle East (less Israel)	36,824
Turkey	11,848

In addition there are Muslims from India and East Africa. People from the Indian subcontinent constitute the main group of Muslims now resident in Britain and the more detailed figures on sex and age structure that are available refer only to Pakistanis and Bangladeshis. The balance between men and women is not quite restored yet: there are 122 males per 100 females of Pakistani origin (including those born in Britain) and 119 males per 100 females of Bangladeshi origin (OPCS 1981). This population is a young one, with a large proportion still under school age. 46.596 are under 16 and 7096 under 44. Only 196 of them are of retirement age (65 for men, 60 for women). Another noticeable feature is that more and more children are born in the UK, adding to the settled character of this population. In 1981 103,000 children of Pakistani origin and 19,000 children of Bangladeshi origin were born in the United Kingdom (OPCS 1981).

In the West Midlands, the second *region* after London *with* a high concentration of Muslims, there are 52,298 residents who were born in Muslim countries.

Pakistan	38,269
Bangladesh	6,595
Malaysia	2,516
Algeria	159
Egypt	1,165 253
Libya	113
Morocco	40
Tunisia	1,232
Iran	2,685
Middle East (less Israel) Turkey	271

Source: OPCS 1981

Turning now to Birmingham which is the specific area of interest for the purpose of this paper, the 1981 census indicated 40,565 Pakistanis and 5,520 Bangladeshi/ (OPCS 1981). An estimate for 1985 gives the following figures:

- 49,300 Pakistanis
- 7,900 Bangladeshis (Hodgins 1985)

For an evaluation of the total Muslim population it is necessary to include in the total *figure*:



- Muslims of Indian origin estimated at 9,820 (Hodgins 1985) -
- Muslims of East African origin: 4,100 (Hodgins 1985)
- Muslims from other countries: about 8,000 (Census 1981).

Altogether these figures *give* us an *estimate* of 80,000 including British born children, i.e. around 8% of the population of *Birmingham*. *Within Birmingham* itself, the Muslim population *is* concentrated in a few *inner* city wards: Soho, Aston, Handsworth, Nechells, Washwood Heath, Small Heath, Sparkbrook, Sparkhill and Moseley, i.e. *nine* out of thirty wards, account for 88% of the Pakistani and Bangladeshi population. (Census 1981, West Midlands)

#### 11 Survey of the mosques in Birmingham

*Following* the settlement of the Muslim populations mosques were established. They are numerous and *varied*. My record shows 55 mosques in Birmingham and only *six* are *situated* in districts which do not contain a high concentration of the Muslim population, but are on the edge of those areas. (Census 1981, West Midlands)

*This* figure may seem very high, but in fact new mosques continue to be created at an accelerating pace. From my survey, the mosques founded before 1970 amount to 40% of the present total, whereas in the following ten years, from 1970 to 1980, newly created mosques account for 32% and from 1980 to 1984 for 27%, that is in a period of less than five years. The multiplication of mosques *is* a testimony to the thriving nature of Islam in Birmingham today. According to my survey all of the mosques own their own *premises* and in 80% of the mosques, those premises are a converted family house or perhaps two terraced houses together. The other 20% are the large mosques in Birmingham which can muster a few thousand people for Eid celebrations and more than a hundred people for *Friday* prayer, compared with the smaller mosques which count only a handful of people *attending* Friday prayer. In all cases except for the Central Mosque, the buildings do not differ from surrounding ones (as oriental designs were not permitted by planning restrictions). In the *big* mosques, internal structural alterations took place with three or four houses brought together, walls were knocked down to create large prayer halls and ablution areas were *installed*; other buildings were bought and modified *internally*, such as the old swimming baths and sports centre, a spectacular and gigantic red brick Victorian building, which is a *classified* monument. Only the Central Mosque was purpose built (1975) and towers over Highgate with its *white* dome and minarets. There does not appear to have been a bid to buy old churches, as in the case of the *Sikhs*. Although mosques were generally created without registering with local authorities as

Although mosques were generally created without registering with local authorities as places of *worship*, most mosques have had to apply for planning *permission*. The *City Council* in the past has shown positive reluctance to grant planning *permission*, *imposing restrictions* and *conditions* which were difficult to meet and do not appear so necessary today. The seventies were fraught *with* enforcement notices and planning refusals (Hodgins 1981). The *City Council* and the newspapers debated the *issue*, *bringing it* to the *attention* of the public in a *sensational* and often racist *fashion*. In the *midst* of *this* discussion, Mohammed Noor from the Islamic Mission *promised* in the Evening Mail, 19.7.76, that no new mosque would be created *without* applying for planning *permission*, a guarantee which in reality he was not in a position to *give*. As a rule mosques were granted planning *permission* only after several applications like the Tennyson Road mosque which applied in 1972, 1974, 1976, 1977 and 1978 and there *remains* today *discontent* over the issue among mosque leaders. It is *estimated* that in 1986, about three quarters of the mosques have planning permission.

Mosques are not only places of *worship*, they perform a variety of functions. In the main, they are mostly frequented by men who pray there and by children who receive religious instruction. In the large mosques such as the Green Lane and the Anderton Road mosques, up to 500 children attend classes; *in* the smallest ones such as the Durham Road mosque less than twenty. In the mosques, the children read Qur'an and commonly also attend language classes (of the language relevant to their country of origin, although not necessarily *their* mother tongue). Moreover the large mosques play the role of community centres and welfare and advice centres and 15% offer sports facilities, 20% have a bookshop and/or *library*. All the mosques claim to have a management *committee*, including a *chairman*, a secretary and a treasurer. According to my survey 70% have *paid* staff, the imam, sometimes the secretary and one or more teachers. A *high* degree of commitment *is* noticeable insofar as *salaries* are kept low (e.g. £4,000 per year for a secretary in a big mosque) and a great number of volunteers donate their time and efforts to the running of the mosque: an average of 11 volunteers per mosque. From my survey 75% of the mosques *claim* that they have more than one imam, who *in* most cases was brought over from the congregation's country/village of *origin*. Because of the diaspora of the Indian and Pakistani people, *it* may mean that the imam came from India whilst the congregation is composed of East African Indians (such as *in* the Clifton Road mosque). There is, however, a developing trend to recruit a "local" imam, from the congregation's community, but who is already resident in Britain (27% from my survey). One mosque took *this initiative* a step further and founded a "college of imams" in order to produce "British" imams (Darul Uloom Islamia, in Golden Hillock Road). There is an increasing awareness that familiarity with the English language and society are useful and necessary attributes for an imam.

The sources of funding for these mosques remain fairly mysterious as it is difficult to extract exact information: they receive fees and donations from the faithful, they sometimes obtain a grant from the City or County Council, and it appears that substantial sums are awarded by Muslim countries, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Pakistan or others in the tide of revival of Islam in the world. The latter may have clear disadvantages as is testified by the Saddam Hussein mosque in Perry Barr, which stands unfinished because funding from Iraq was interrupted.

As was noted earlier, mosques are numerous and varied in Birmingham. It is possible to find two mosques in the same street, and not rare to find mosques within walking distance of one another. This phenomenon can be explained by a diversity of factors:

1. Although the Muslim population in Birmingham is concentrated in inner city areas rather than being dispersed throughout the town, it is still distributed over a large area. Muslims prefer to have a mosque in their vicinity to which they can walk at prayer time. This is reinforced by the fact that mosques attend to children's education, as madrasa (Qur'anic schools) and it is impossible for them, especially small children, to travel a long distance to the mosque everyday by bus, after school, in particular during the winter when days are short.

2. Despite Islam's denial of recognising national boundaries, mosques in Birmingham have been created on an ethnic/national basis. This is partly determined by the fact that chain migration brought to the same area of residence in Britain, people from the same area of origin. But it is also the case that people from different areas or countries of origin often live in the same neighbourhood. It is then very possible or even likely that several mosques will be created accordingly.

The vast majority of mosques are Pakistani based, and can be subdivided according to the region of origin:

- mosques with a predominantly Punjabi congregation, one example is the, mosque in

Anderton Road.

- mosques whose people come from Azad Kashmir (Mirpur) such as the Green Lane mosque
- "Pathan" based mosques: e.g. the Woodstock Road mosque. In reality, the term Pathan here commonly includes, not only the "authentic" Pathans, inhabitants of the North West Frontier area in Pakistan, but also Campbellpuris who come from the extreme North West of Punjab, close to the North West Frontier.

In addition, there are other nationally based mosques: - with a congregation from Bangladesh:  
eg: 523 Coventry Road

- with a Yemeni congregation:

eg: Edward Road

- finally, people from East Africa, the majority of whom originate from Gujerat in India

eg: Clifton Road.

At the same time the ethnic national character of the congregation is often not homogeneous and can be mixed, with one group being more numerous.

3 - Finally, what contributes to the multiplication of mosques is the existence of theological differences between trends and sects in Islam, expressed at times with emphasis and hostility.

(a) Most of the mosques are Sunni Hanafi mosques and are divided into two main groupings

(1) - Followers of Sufism: the majority are called Barelwi (named after a village in India where the sect was founded) and are of the Nagshbandi order. The main Sufi centre is situated in Golden Hillock Road, followers of a Shaykh in Pakistan, and it is in the process of organising a federation of Sufi mosques (17 mosques in the Midlands), but these do not include all the Sufi mosques. They generally refer to themselves as Sunni, excluding the non-Sufi mosques, although the latter ones may fall within the Sunni category.

(2) - non Sufi mosques

- the Deobandis, who take their name after a village in India, and seem to be the least open to British society.

- the Jamaat-i-Islami: the politico-religious movement in Pakistan, whose founder and mentor was Maulana Abul-A-Ia Mawdudi (who died in 1980). In Britain they are represented by the UK Islamic mission which claims 35 branches nationally and six branches locally. Its headquarters are the Sparkbrook Islamic Association in Anderton Road, one of the largest mosques in Birmingham. New branches are being opened in other areas. They are well organised and dynamic. In lay language one would call them fundamentalist although this term is not a satisfactory one and may suggest misleading connotations.

(b) the Markazi Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith

It claims 16 branches in the UK and four branches locally. They are followers of a movement founded in Saudi Arabia. This organisation is well structured and expanding, with its headquarters in Birmingham, 20 Green Lane.

(c) Moreover there are a number of sects with a lesser presence in Birmingham: - two shia places of worship:

- the *Woodview Drive* Imambaragh, Punjabi based *which claims 300 families* in Clifton Road, the *congregation* comes from East Africa
- one Ismaeli mosque in Suffolk Street
- one *Ahmaddiya* centre: those *claim* to be Muslims but are not *recognised* as such by other *Muslims*
- one *Alawi Zawia* whose followers come from Yemen.

Theological divisions are compounded *with* political alliances, there *exist* two councils of mosques, and groupings around some *individual* leaders.

### III Mosques and *communities*

The demographic map of *Birmingham* (Census 1981, West Midlands) shows the presence of a *substantial* population of Muslim origin in a few areas of concentration in the inner city. This population is not homogeneous *with regard* to its national or ethnic origin, but the various groups have reconstituted dense networks and concomitant economic, social and religious activities, institutions and structures. The increasing number of mosques in all parts of the city bears witness to this.

The *role* of mosques and Muslim associations will be examined in a latter part of this paper. Prior to this, it is necessary to explore the relationship between institutions and *communities* in terms of the observance and preservation of Islam. This interaction is a dynamic one.

1. Islam entered Britain with Muslim immigrants. The Muslim communities provided the material bases and the subjective factors that led to the creation of mosques, the people gathered funds to acquire a place of worship and although in principle any man versed in Islam can become an imam, Muslims in Britain often sent *for an imam from* their country or area of origin. A *few* individuals played a decisive *role* in the establishment of mosques but those initiatives could only bear fruit because they were sustained by the group.

2 It is a characteristic feature of Islam that it is a din, it governs not only religious practice and morality but social relationships, marriage, divorce, *family* relations, economics, politics and the most humble actions of everyday *life*. As a consequence, the more complete the Muslim communities, the more lively and all embracing the presence of Islam in Birmingham. The first single Muslim men who came to Birmingham to work founded a mosque in Speedwell Road as early as 1947. But it is the changing structure of Muslim populations, reuniting *families, wives, children* and even older kin, including the extended family, which made Islam a *factor* to be reckoned with. Pakistanis,

Bangladeshis and other Muslims established their own grocery and clothes shops, *their* banks, their butchers, so that most everyday needs could be satisfied within the *communities* in the areas populated by Muslims. This allowed *for the reorganisation* of a way of life more akin to what used to exist in the home country, but also closer to the Muslim din. For instance, the use of Muslim banks makes it possible not to commit the sin of taking interest *from others for* self gain, and the Muslim practice of eating halal meat can only be observed thanks to the numerous halal meat butchers situated in the vicinity of people's residences.

3 More significant yet is the moral and centripetal pressure of *family* and social networks which re-emphasises the necessity of religious observance as one will be judged by such observance by kin, neighbours and fellow Muslims (It is *for* that reason, as we were told, that if a Muslim man goes to a pub he will not frequent those of *his* neighbourhood). The religious and moral rectitude of each individual man, woman and youth are over seen by the community. Collective practice at the mosque, such as Friday prayer or Eid celebrations strengthens furthermore the social and religious character of Islamic observance.

4 Given these circumstances, the mosques are not solely *passive* places of worship. They fulfill many functions; the essential feature to remember is that, whilst they express and reflect the people's religious convictions, they, in turn, restructure and *reinforce* these convictions. The bigger and better organised mosques are the dynamic *factor* which campaigns a stricter observance and wider expansion of Islam in Birmingham. Moreover, the funding and inspiration drawn *from Muslim countries* and the international revival of Islamic movements have contributed to consolidate the impact of the mosques and Islam in Birmingham.

### IV Islam: an ideological movement

Muslim leaders have expressed their concern *for* the development of Islam in Britain, where it is subject to the menace of an alien environment. They portray Western society as meaningless, aimless, *rootless*, characterised by vandalism, crime, juvenile delinquency, the collapse of marriages and *psychiatric* disorder. They postulate that Islam can provide an alternative lifestyle in Europe: Islam is presented as an ideological movement confronted *with* the ideology of the West and of capitalist secular society. Whereas the latter is *said* by Muslims to have lost its moral signposts, they *claim* that Islam proposes a sense of purpose and holds high its moral precepts advocating truthfulness, justice, equality, obedience to one's parents. Islam is said to liberate man

from "Western"-like materialism, egoism and money-grabbing corruption. To the overriding selfish individualism of the West, is contrasted the Muslim collective responsibility, the correct appreciation of accountability to family, society, fellow Muslims, of the employer to the employee and vice-versa. To the "Western decadent promiscuity" between men and women, sexual education at school, the mixing of sexes in all areas of life including school, the wearing of revealing feminine clothes, is opposed the modesty of Muslim women, the well-regulated interactions between men and women, in which Islam allows both for their spiritual and material needs. Moreover Islam is often presented by Muslims as the religion of measure and moderation, striking the right balance between the excesses of capitalism (extreme individualism) and communism (extreme collectivism). Islam is said to permit individual initiatives (On art, business, science) without the loss of collective responsibility.

Muslim leaders claim that Islam is perfectly capable of adapting to a modern technological society, indeed, they stress, the seeking of knowledge and the desirability of progress are vigorously encouraged in Qur'an. They only reject modernisation if it aims at fulfilling material needs whilst disregarding moral matters, since it ends up breaking the structure of society, as is happening in the West. They argue that a good Muslim education can keep at bay evils such as drug addiction, gambling and drinking which afflict the young people of this society. A recurring theme in our interviews with Muslims, is that Islam creates "good citizens", and as evidence of this they point to the absence of Muslim youth participation in the recent riots in Handsworth (1985). They are convinced of the moral superiority of Islam and believe that British society has a lot to learn from it, but they are nonetheless preoccupied with the potentially pernicious influence of Westernism, which is the ruling ideology in the society in which they live.

## **Part Two: Maintaining and reproducing Islam in Britain**

**In** response to this newer environment, in their country of settlement, Muslims in Britain have followed a dual strategy for the observance and reproduction of Islam outside the Dar el Islam:<sup>3</sup>

1 - They established the necessary institutions for the essential tenets of their religious practice, addressing their efforts to the Muslim communities themselves.

2 - they attempted to influence British institutions and individuals with a view to making a space for Muslims in their midst.

I Measures addressed to Muslim communities

A Creating the conditions for the observance of Islamic practice: the mosques

**In** Islam, a mosque is a sine qua non for compliance with one's religious duties, especially prayer, which cannot all be performed individually. Thus arose the initial motivation for the creation of mosques in Birmingham: a place of worship. Though it will be shown that they fulfil other functions, the mosques have at least organised and structured the religious life and practices of Muslims. Numerous mosques distributed throughout the city makes it possible for a good number of men to be within reach of a mosque and thus to comply with the obligatory congregational prayer at midday Friday. The smallest mosques, which were previously private houses, gather a dozen or two men every Friday afternoon, the biggest mosques may have between one and few hundred men on that occasion. Muslims are of course confronted with the concrete problem of living in a Christian society where Friday is not a holy day, and thus most of them cannot leave their employment to attend the mosque. Muslim leaders have pointed out, however, that the dramatic increase in unemployment has made it possible for more and younger people to attend Friday prayer, whereas it would otherwise be feasible only for retired men.

The highlights of the year for Muslims and the most active period of the mosques' life are the two most important religious celebrations:

- Eid-ul-Fitr celebrated at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan

- Eid-ul-Adha celebrated on the lath of the Islamic calendar month of Dhul-Hadi to commemorate the sacrifice of Ishmael by Abraham.

There are also smaller scale festivals such as the anniversary of Prophet Mohammed's birthday. On those occasions the mosques become a hustle of activity: the month of Ramadan itself attracts many people to the mosque on breaking their daily fast. Eid days are festive events: they constitute a family and social as well as a religious

occasion. The streets leading up to the mosques are filled with entire families in their best attire, on their way to Eid prayers. The mosques' prayer halls are full: from a few hundred to thousands of people, depending on the size of the mosque. In most cases, workers book a day off to allow for it although this is not altogether unproblematic as the exact date of Eid cannot be known in advance as it depends on the first sighting of the moon. The mosques have now come to an agreement on the precise day of Eid. The great number of mosques divide the congregation which is thereby dispersed; but the Central Mosque invites imams from a variety of mosques to take part in the celebration and people of different trends get together in a communal celebration.

Altogether, the revitalisation of Islam is well-served by Friday prayers, and particularly Eid celebrations which also fulfil a mobilising role. It gives an opportunity to the imam Khatib (who in principle is well versed in Islamic theology) to address his congregation and instruct them in Islam. The issue and message transmitted vary slightly according to mosque and imam. The better scholars of Islam who head the biggest associations have emphasised the necessity to address issues directly relevant to the difficulties of maintaining an Islamic outlook and strict observance in British society and their sermons reflect their endeavour to strengthen Muslim convictions and practices despite an adverse environment. They have also emphasised the need for an imam Khatib able to preach and instruct in Islam, alongside the imam Ratib whose role is to lead everyday prayers (apart from Friday at midday). The leaders of the better organised mosques deplore the fact that a lot of the small mosques only have an imam Ratib, and nobody who can really preach to the congregation. The mosques also organise the collection of alms (zakat) deemed to be equal to 2.5% of one's income, thus accomplishing one of the five pillars of Islam. The role of the mosques as described above is directed primarily at the first generation of Muslim settlers, although the younger ones benefit all the same (but specific measures are taken towards them): to provide the basis for ensuring their practice and observance of Islam.

The mosques have also taken other initiatives:

1 - most of them have published a timetable of prayer times throughout the year, some of which are glamorous and colourful calendars, others are simple duplicated sheets. Here again they are indispensable as a result of living in a non-Muslim society. In the home country, the muezzin call for prayer could be heard by everyone. In an attempt to re-establish this practice the Central mosque has sought official permission for the call for prayer, and it has now been granted within the limits agreed.

2 - one of the biggest mosques has published a handbook giving a detailed analysis of the contents of food available on the market, indicating the make of the producer, and distinguishing between halal and haram components: Haram and Halal in Islam.

3 - Another booklet has been published, this time specifically addressed to parents, warning them of all the school practices which run counter to Islamic precepts and informing them of their legal rights regarding their children in English schools (such as the right to withdraw them from religious education and assemblies): Muslim children in British Schools. Their right and Duties.

*If* - There are also two monthly periodicals in Urdu, Azan and Sirat-e-Mustaqueen published in Birmingham and two in English, the Straight Path and AI Tawhid.

Amongst their other functions, the mosques and their imams are present in key passages of life of Muslims:

1 marriages are very often celebrated at home by an imam who goes to the house of the bride and the bridegroom. In this case a second marriage ceremony must take place at the registry office as well so that it is recognised by British law. As an alternative the Central Mosque in Birmingham arranged for the visit of Her Majesty's Registrar at the mosque on weekdays and Saturday, so that both religious and civil marriages could be performed on the premises of the mosque. There are about one or two such marriages celebrated at the Central Mosque every week. This is a case in which Muslims are treated differently from Christian or Jewish religions under British law. In the case of a Catholic or Church of England priest or a Rabbi performing a religious marriage ceremony, no additional civil marriage is required as the religious one is legally recognised.

2 Funeral duties are also organised in the major mosques which have a morgue with cleansing and preservation facilities. Up until now, most burials have taken place in the country of origin to which the deceased are sent by their kin. In a town like Bradford negotiations have taken place between the Council of Mosques and the Bradford City Council so that new arrangements would make it possible to conduct burial as soon after death as possible (as prescribed by Islam), outside cemetery hours and at weekends if necessary; the community would also be able to use a shroud instead of a coffin. In Birmingham, there are two burial grounds for Muslims, on separate sites within a cemetery: one is to be found in Handsworth and the other in Kings Heath (the latter generally receives children).

Mosques are trying to widen the scope of their facilities and activities: the Central Mosque for instance caters for old people who have a room where they can drink tea and read religious publications. The bigger mosques run an advice centre and one of them even has a marriage bureau. Other activities fall under the general label of advice and pastoral role.

Mosques are still mostly frequented by men; women are not under obligation to perform the main Friday prayer collectively and tend to be confined at home. Although they are officially welcome in the mosque, some of the more old-fashioned mosque leaders have discouraged them from appearing at the mosque. According to my survey only 0.5% of the faithful attending Friday prayer are women and 50% of the mosques do not have any women attending Friday prayer. On the contrary some other mosques have encouraged the whole family to attend, one of them in particular transformed Sunday into a family religious occasion where men, women and children gather to pray, listen to sermons and partake of a collective meal (men and women in separate rooms).

Most of this intense social and religious Muslim life remains unknown to and unnoticed by the wider British population. There are a few material signs of it. Evidence of a Muslim presence in Birmingham is provided by the characteristic oriental dome of the Central Mosque and by Arabic inscriptions on the facade of buildings of houses that have been turned into mosques, but those remain fairly discreet as these buildings do not differ from surrounding ones. In addition a few large mosques possess shops which display and sell Muslim literature in Arabic, Urdu and English, together with a whole collection of colourful concrete symbolic representations of Islam: prayer mats, photos and woven pictures of Mecca, badges and embroidered "Bismillah" and "Allah" (in Arabic), and even natural wood fibre toothbrushes. Similar items can be found in many of the other ordinary shops, and in the homes, few of which do not display a picture of Mecca in a prominent place.

#### B. The younger generation

The main concern and focus of attention of Muslim populations and mosque leaders is to ensure that the next generation is not lost to Islam, as it will determine the reproduction and continuity of Islam. This is why efforts and resources are devoted to the Muslim instruction of the children. Some children are sent to read Qur'an in private homes where an individual takes in a small group of students. Others attend classes at the madrasa of the mosques. Altogether the vast majority of children go through some measure of Islamic schooling and all the mosques we visited held at least Qur'an classes. Some of the big mosques sent mini-buses around to collect children.

Despite unanimity on the need for Islamic instruction, the shape it takes leads to divided opinions and an ongoing debate. On the one hand some people feel that extra lessons over and above normal school hours and home work overburden the children; they would like these classes to take place within school hours; at this stage however this is wishful

thinking as the issue of religious education in state schools is far from being resolved, as far as Muslims are concerned.

Another serious bone of contention is that of teaching methods in the diverse mosques. A lot of the smaller mosques adopt a traditional teaching approach especially if their teacher is not familiar with the English environment and language. The children are simply taught to decipher Qur'an, ie. literally to read Qur'an without understanding the meaning of the text itself, let alone discuss it. Qur'an is written in Arabic and most of these children speak Punjabi or Bengali, their mother tongue; even the tiny minority of children whose parents come from an Arab country such as Yemen, are not equipped to understand classical Arabic with the bare spoken Arabic they master. The more dynamic leaders of mosques pointed to the danger inherent in this form of teaching: that it be totally ineffectual or even negative. They are well aware of the qualitatively different environment surrounding children in European countries. It is felt that British schools lack discipline and encourage the children to seek understanding and be ready to question the teacher; this is reinforced by the attitude of the children's English peers. The undisputed respect and reverence which is expected by traditional imams is not likely to be forthcoming from children brought up in the UK. Moreover the overpowering influence of the values of "Westernism" which is the dominant ideology is not only taught at school but pervade the media: television, radio, videos. These are perceived as a concrete threat which moulds the ideas and behaviour of Muslim children and which cannot be counteracted by traditional methods of reading Qur'an (i.e. literally reading it through without understanding a word). This is an area where a number of mosques have taken initiatives and launched a debate on the teaching of Islam within the new circumstances of living in British society. They advocate modifications and adaptations capable of meeting the "onslaught of Westernism". In the first place, in those mosques, English is used as a medium of communication alongside of, or instead of, Urdu and Arabic, as the children feel more comfortable using English - in fact at classes that we attended, the children would answer in English even when they were addressed in Urdu. In a few cases, a "bilingual" Qur'an is used for advanced studies, with the text in English matching the corresponding page in Arabic; thereafter discussion and comments on a particular passage took place in English. In the biggest and best organised mosques the life of Prophet Mohammed, the History of Islam and Islamic law are also studied, in addition to Urdu, Arabic and/or Bengali as language subjects. The leaders of a few mosques take pride in the high standard of the teaching in their institution as some have established such a reputation. Some of these classes have led to the taking of GCE 'O' levels in Urdu and Arabic. A yearly awarding of certificates on the occasion of a ceremonial distribution of prizes is the highlight of the year for children and parents.

Birmingham dignitaries are invited. The event impresses on everyone the seriousness of

the teaching and stimulates interest and efforts which are rewarded by the public recognition of achievements.

In one of the mosques, in Coventry Road, all embracing measures have been undertaken to ensure a proper Muslim education for children: the creation of a fee paying private Muslim school for thirteen boys. It started in September 1985 and it is still difficult to formulate an opinion on its development. It only services a small number of children. But already some of the people we interviewed have expressed doubt about this school's standard of education. Another important mosque has established its own college of Muslim "priests" who are boarders (twelve boys), with a view to forming a new generation of British bred Muslim scholars and imams.

The "vanguard" of Muslim leaders in Birmingham do not have any doubts about the superiority of Muslim values over the western ones, but they believe that these values have to be well explained and fully understood by youngsters and adolescents to stand any chance of being preserved. They consider that in Western societies common sense and family transmitted ideology cannot possibly be sufficient on account of the incompetence and ignorance of traditional ulema and parents.

### C. Issues of Concern

Through this Islamic instruction parents and Muslim leaders hope to impart the values which are essential to Islam. In addition to religious rites and practices a number of issues are worth considering as they assume particular importance in a non-Islamic society.

#### 1 - The family

Family life is the basis and cornerstone of Islamic society. It is seen as an institution founded by Allah's will and going back to the beginning of the creation (Adam and Eve). Obedience and respect for parents is constantly stressed in Islamic teachings. In reality, the preservation of a tightly knit family network has undoubtedly been an asset for the preservation of an Islamic way of life in Britain. The basis of the Islamic family, as expounded in the sacred sources, is marriage. According to Islam, marriage is recommended as it contributes to keep a balance between the spiritual and bodily requirements, and fulfills one's duties to Allah. The arranged marriages which are the norm among the Muslim populations, such as Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, are not the result of Muslim prescription. According to Islamic law, marriage is a sacred contract between two parties, the bridegroom and the bride, and any marriage contracted without the permission of the girl is generally invalid. Arranged marriages have a cultural basis

and, on the whole, like the family system, contribute to the preservation of Islam as they ensure that no "deviant" will be brought in who might disrupt the internal harmony of a Muslim family. Yet the family can also be a source of problems for the transmission of Islam to the next generation on account of a possible breakdown of communication between parents and children. Most of the parents come from rural areas and are not educated; many have kept a world outlook totally alien to the workings of the society of settlement. It may be difficult for them to understand their children brought up in a completely different context in Britain, and vice versa. Muslim leaders have underlined for us that it may lead the younger generation to reject the Islamic way of life as they could be alienated from it, by their parents traditional and rigid ways, which they fail to understand.

#### 2 - Girls and women

In this context, the most problematic area is that of the position of the girls. The mosques and parents show a great deal of concern for the education of girls as they are seen as more vulnerable in British society which contravenes all the rules of good Muslim behaviour that girls are supposed to abide by, in particular because it mixes sexes in all spheres of life including school. According to my survey 1,000 girls attend classes in the mosques, constituting one third of the pupils. Muslim leaders describe the girls as the mothers of tomorrow: they will be the ones who transmit a proper Muslim way of life and values to children to come, as their prime responsibility is to be the upbringing of the family. Hence their crucial importance. They could jeopardize the whole family structure ("the basis of Islamic society") if they did not conform. As culture intertwines with religion the whole family honour ("izzat") can be thrown into disrepute by a daughter's behaviour. There are two main areas where a clash of aspirations between parents and daughters is likely to be the sharpest:

##### (a) The question of marriage

In arranged marriages where these are customary, if a girl does not feel ready to marry or does not like the partner planned by her parents a potential crisis exists, in the case where no compromise can be reached. But these are still uncommon situations.

##### (b) Education

Most girls wish to pursue their education at least until sixteen and some would like to attend further education courses leading to a career. The choice of an acceptable career for a woman is itself a dilemma, but the main issue remains education. On many occasions parents withdraw their daughters from schooling as soon as it is legally possible (at sixteen) and in some cases daughters are kept at

home (or sent back to the home country) as soon as they finish primary school. The main reason for this is that Muslim parents refuse to send their daughters to mixed schools: single sex schools are very scarce and there are no single sex colleges or universities. This is a source of great frustration for the girls and it has been known for girls to run away from home for that reason. In some instances the mosques reinforce the parents' decision. In other cases mosque leaders have intervened in order to reconcile both parties and convince parents to be more flexible. One of the mosques has taken steps to found a women's hostel to ensure that women and girls in that situation would at least find a home in a good Muslim environment. Muslims feel that other women's hostels are inadequate, such as the one called "Link House" which is run by non-Muslims under the auspices of Birmingham City Council.

Paradoxically, Islam emphasises the value of education for boys and girls; the biggest and more dynamic mosques, such as the Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith, make a point of organising classes for girls which go beyond Qur'an reading. The girls who are well voiced in Islam are then able to find arguments in Islam itself to further their insistence on pursuing

their education.

### 3 Leisure

Although most of the leisure time is spent amongst kin, mainly in family visits, it has become evident that alternative occupations are necessary as Muslim leaders fear that the opportunities or rather "temptations" of British society might attract Muslim young people. This risk is seen to be aggravated by the high rate of unemployment which does not offer tangible perspectives for the future for young people. The frustration and disillusionment they experience may lead to their greater affinities with other young people, who gather together in gangs, "hang around" in cafes and gambling places or discos (this applies mostly to boys, as girls are generally kept at home). Moreover the youth centres existing are seen as unsuitable because there, boys and girls mix freely, drink can be available, drugs might be circulated.

Muslim leaders feel that Islam can offer an ideological alternative and the better organised mosques have begun to propose concrete alternative activities. With this purpose in mind they are attempting to cater also for the leisure activities of young people. This area of work of the mosque is still fairly undeveloped as yet: they have a few items of equipment such as table tennis and snooker tables. Six of the mosques have a bookshop and/or library. Some organise holiday trips and camps. A Muslim scout group was formed in Sattley. Attempts to cater for girls are fewer and less successful.

Altogether the declared intention is to provide leisure activities within a propitious Muslim environment, such as mosque premises or in holiday camps run by Muslims. It was stressed by one of the Muslim organisers that these camps were not designed for religious instruction but fitted in sports and games within the pattern and rhythm of life of Islam and provided opportunities for the discussion of issues.

The Muslim leaders who have expressed great concern for the young people, however, still deplore the fact that the mosques are mostly frequented by very young or old people and have not yet succeeded in attracting adolescents in substantial numbers.

## II Interaction with British institutions

Having organised the reproduction of Islamic faith and practices within their own communities, Muslims also took into account interaction with British society. Muslim communities are in Britain to stay and they are now attempting to make inroads into British institutions so that a space can be gradually opened for Muslims.

A major area of concern is the education system as it is correctly seen by the "first generation" as a determining factor in the formative years of young Muslims. Several initiatives have been taken by mosque representatives and a number of individual parents linked to Muslim associations, who contacted schools in areas populated by Muslims. One specific feature of the British education system is that it gives a large measure of discretion to heads of schools. This flexibility has enabled the heads of schools, who have recognised the need to take into account the presence of sometimes 90% of pupils of Muslim origin, to introduce adjustments despite the absence of any statutory directive. To take the example of a particular school, where 52% of the pupils are of Muslim origin (Ward End School in Washwood Heath), the following measures are implemented for Muslims:

- one visiting Muslim, from the Sparkbrook Islamic Association comes to take the assembly twice a week
- for two weeks before Eid festivals the assemblies are devoted to items relating to

Islam

the religious education syllabus includes Islam

Muslim pupils are given the opportunity to offer their Friday afternoon prayer

girls are allowed to wear their own style of clothes: tunics and trousers (shalwar, kameez) provided these conform to the school uniform colour, this is a common practice in many schools attended by Muslims



girls can opt out of swimming and for physical education wear tracksuits instead of the regulation short skirt.

This example is not an isolated one. A similar situation can be found in other schools. At the time of Eid, a social gathering is organised in those schools with the cooperation of parents who prepare the food for the event. A few school heads have also made a conscious effort to appoint a member of the community on their staff, as a teacher or as a school liaison officer. These achievements may sound impressive compared to the situation which obtained ten or fifteen years ago. This is illustrated by an incident quoted in the Birmingham Post (7.1.1970) headlined "five Muslim girls banned from school for wearing trousers". As a result, they had been missing school since November 1969.

In reality, such modifications as have occurred, have occurred on an ad hoc basis and have depended entirely on the understanding and goodwill of individual head teachers. Here again, the specific features of the British education system open the door to a series of demands and contentions. The Education Act 1944 makes it a legal requirement to hold morning assemblies and to include religious education on the curriculum in state schools, yet at the same time regulations do not incorporate any guidelines which could take into account the existence of a substantial Muslim population. This has motivated the mosques and Muslim associations to form a group dealing with the issue of education. The Muslim Liaison Committee had brought together more than fifty Muslim organisations by 1983. There are now sixty five affiliated organisations. One of its main objectives, in addition to advising Muslim parents, is to negotiate a series of measures, aimed at Muslim children in schools within the Birmingham education authority, on the basis of a thirteen points memorandum (see appendix). The initial reactions of the Birmingham press expressed outrage at the MLC initiative as Mahmood Ahmad Mirpuri notes in "The rights of Muslim pupils in Birmingham schools" where he applies himself to answer the Birmingham Post. A working group has been formed composed of seven Muslim Liaison Committee representatives, five headteachers from inner city areas and five persons from the City Council department of education. They have agreed on a document which is neither statutory nor mandatory but will constitute guidelines for all headteachers of schools with Muslim pupils. This document is not available publicly as yet.

One salient issue is that of religious education. There is unanimity among parents and Muslim leaders that the school curriculum should incorporate Islam. There are differences of opinion however as to whether what is needed is religious education or religious instruction. In the latter case Muslims feel that it cannot possibly be taught by a non-Muslim. In addition to the actual teaching of Islam, a whole series of issues arise:

- the morning assembly

- the Friday congregational prayer
- the availability of halal food
- holidays for the main Muslim celebrations Eid ul Fitr and Eid ul Adha
- exemption from sexual education
- the question of girls' education, which includes several demands for single sex schools, or at least non-mixed physical education and swimming classes, modest clothing (the uniform is unacceptable as skirts are compulsory)
- the employment of more Muslim staff, there are only between 10 and 15 Muslim teachers out of 11,000 in the Birmingham Local Education Authority
- the teaching of mother tongue (this is not directly associated with religion).

We do not know as yet the extent to which these points have been met by the education authority in the document mentioned above. The negotiations between the MLC and the education authority have been very long-drawn out. Most mosque leaders declare that they have adopted a patient attitude and have deliberately discarded the confrontational strategy adopted in Bradford. As a consequence, the slowness of the process has begun to irritate a number of mosque representatives who are now proposing a hardening of the line. Others have expressed the view that the MLC is too big and cumbersome to constitute an efficient committee. The response to the document still remains to be

seen.

One issue which is debated at the moment is that of separate Muslim schools. It has not been put forward as a vehement demand although Muslims in Birmingham would welcome them. But even some hardliners have expressed caution on that issue, insisting on the need to insure a good academic level of education in such schools. Others would prefer to use this demand as a bargaining lever. But in any case realism is prevalent and it was stated frequently that, even if there were Muslim schools, there would not be enough of them to cover all the Muslim children, a large number of Muslims would still have to attend state schools.

As has been noted earlier a crucial area of concern is that of the girls: both Muslim parents and mosque representatives insist on the preservation of single sex schools for girls. This runs counter to the process of comprehensivisation undertaken in Birmingham. Within the Birmingham education authority area, there are ten girls' schools left out of ninety nine secondary state schools. A compromise appears to have been reached by the working party on this matter.<sup>5</sup>

Parents and Muslim leaders also deplore what they consider to be a lack of discipline in state schools. This has led a number of them to enrol their children in Catholic, Jewish

or Church of England schools. Ironically, in a few cases it has reached such proportions that some of these schools have a majority of Muslim pupils. The Voluntary Sector school authorities have expressed some concern as to whether these schools could continue to keep the denominational characteristics.

Education is the main area in which Muslims have made concrete efforts to intervene and interact with British society. But it is not the only one. As part of their pastoral work, imams or mosque representatives visit hospitals and prisons. They are also in contact with the social services and provide an informal advisory service. Some of the mosques have established contacts with churches in their area with which they hold regular meetings. For example in Highgate the Central Mosque entertains a particularly friendly relationship with their neighbourhood Baptist church and its very open minded minister. The Islamic Resource Centre takes part in multi-faith encounters; such as religious celebrations comprising Muslims, Jews and Christians. It also collaborated with the Selly Oak Colleges and Birmingham University to organise a series of lectures on Islam.

The bigger associations also pay great attention to public relations such as inviting dignitaries like the Lord Mayor and Mayoress to preside over the prize giving ceremony at the Jamiat Markazi Ahl-e-Hadith, or organising Eid parties addressed to a variety of guests including the neighbouring school and church staff, social workers, and councillors, as the Sparkbrook Islamic Association does.

Altogether, one feels that changes and progress remain very slow, and Muslims display a remarkable patience. Despite their repeated assertions that Islam does not distinguish between political and religious worlds, Muslims have been least incisive in their efforts to intervene in the political arena. Mosques and Muslim associations have approached local authorities for planning permission and grants, mostly under the inner city urban partnership scheme. Most of the grants accorded were destined to mother tongue teaching programmes or community centre types of activities. Muslims are remarking that there is a reticence on the part of the authorities to award grants for religious projects and some have voiced their discontent on this matter, from my survey 68% of the mosques felt that local government authorities are unhelpful. Nevertheless Muslim organisations have not cut themselves off from British political and local authority institutions. They currently approach City and County councillors or MPs for advice or for help. From my survey only 5% of the mosques had never approached a councillor or MP., but they have not taken any active part in this area. The few Muslim city councillors in position have not been elected as a result of an organised Muslim lobby. Although Muslim organisations will state that it would be useful to have more Muslim councillors or MPs (there is no Muslim MP in Birmingham), they have not attempted to

sponsor any candidate to further their interests. Both councillors of Muslim origin and mosques consider this a weakness partly due to the lack of unity of Muslims and a lack of political will.

#### Conclusion

This paper has shown that Muslims cannot be overlooked in Birmingham in 1986. They have already been successful in setting up numerous mosques in order to create better conditions for Islamic observance. Islam is thriving and its followers are attempting to install structures for the reproduction of their religion. A great deal of effort has been devoted to measures addressed to the younger generation. Muslims have been capable of creating facilities for religious instruction within their own communities. They are also endeavouring to make a place for themselves within British institutions, in particular the education system. Progress is very slow, but, necessarily, progress there will be. And there are already harbingers that the next generation, when it takes over, will make use of its better knowledge of and participation in British society in order to ensure a place for Islam.

Notes

- The partition of India and Pakistan (1947). Mirpur The building of the Mangla Dam in (early sixties).
- 2 These figures include people born in Pakistan or Bangladesh and those who live in a house whose head of household is Pakistani or Bangladeshi.
- 3 Literally, the house of Islam, i.e. a Muslim country.
- 4 Muslim scholars.
- 5 This has not yet been released officially.

APPENDIX A

MADRASAH SALFIA (ISLAMIC SCHOOL FOR MUSLIM CHILDREN)

Madrasah Salfia is the name of the evening school which runs within the centre each weekday evening for the Muslim children living in the area. During the last year the Madrasah has seen a staggering increase in pupils. At the end of July 1981 there were approximately 150 pupils, at the end of July 1982 we have over three hundred and already the demand is rising. We have plans to employ more teachers in the near future. Another restricting factor is the lack of classroom space at the centre. As soon as funds are available we hope to convert part of the derelict section of the building for classroom use.

The Madrasah incorporates a planned syllabus which is decided at the beginning of each year. The syllabus is planned to provide the best possible education for Muslim children.

The structure of the Madrasah is as follows: there are seven classes in the madrasah. Group A is the most senior group in the Madrasah and is conducted by Maulana Mahmood Ahmad Mirpuri. This group has studied a wide range of Islamic subjects to a very high standard. During the past year they have studied the following subjects on which they were examined in August 1982: 1. Our'an. 2. Hadith. 3. Jauheed. 4. Memorization (Hifz). 5. Islamic Fiqh. 6. Islamic manners. 7. Islamic Culture. 8. Urdu Reading. 9. Urdu Writing. 10. History and Geography. The level to which this group has progressed is remarkable considering that this is only a part time school and that all the students attend state schools during the day. The age range of this group is 14-18.

GROUP B This group is under the tuition of Mr M.A.K. Saqib. This group has also progressed to a high level but is intended for pupils of a lower age range. The average age of the students is between 12 and 15. The subjects studied during the last year are as follows: 1. Our' an. 2. Hadith. 3. Memorization. 4. Tauheed. 5. Islamic Fiqh. 6. Biography of the Prophet. 7. History of Islam. 8. Islamic general knowledge. 9. Islamic manners. 10. Islamic culture.!. Urdu reading and writing. 12. Geography. The pupils of this group were examined in all these subjects in the annual examinations held in August 1982.

GROUP C The teacher of Group C is Master Fazal Haq who is a highly qualified and respected teacher having had vast experience in the field of teaching. His group studied the following subjects: 1. Our'an. 2. Memorization. 3. Islamic Fiqh. 4. Urdu Reading. 5. Urdu writing. 6. Seerat of Prophet. 7. Hadith. An examination was held in August.

GROUP D This group is taught by Maulana Abdul Hadi and has studied the following subjects: 1. Our'an. 2. Hadith. 3. Memorization. 4. Life of Prophet. 5. Islamic manners. 6. Urdu Reading. 7. Urdu writing.

GROUP E Brother Ahmad Y oosul is the teacher of this group which studied the following subjects: 1. Our'an. 2. Memorization. 3. Urdu. 4. Life of Prophet.

GROUP F Mr Mumtaz Ali, one of the most likeable teachers at the centre teaches this group the following subjects: 1. Our'an. 2. Memorization. 3. Tauheed. 4. Urdu. 5. Life of the Prophet. 6. Islamic manners.

GROUP G This is the girls group. The class is held separately and is taken by a female teacher. During the last year they studied the following subjects: 1. Our'an. 2. Memorization. 3. Urdu. 4. Tauheed. 5. Life of Prophet. 6. Islamic manners.

GROUP H This is by far the largest group in the Madrasah. The students in this group are at the most basic stage in their education. The students study basic subjects including: Our'an, Arabic Alphabet, Namaz, Articles of Faith and First book of Urdu. There are four teachers for this group which has over 150 pupils. They are, Oar Abdus Salam, Maulana Muhammad Idrees Raji, Mr Khadim Hussain and Mr Aftab.

This progress made by the students during the past year has been quite impressive. Obviously with such limited teaching time it is difficult to give a complete education to Muslim children. However, when we consider that the children have to attend state schools during the day and only attend the Islamic classes in their spare time, putting a great deal of pressure on them, their achievements have been truly staggering. Of course there is the risk that with such pressures the children might suffer in their regular school education it is usually possible to develop a balance between the two.

The annual prize-giving ceremony of the Madrasah is one of the most enjoyable days of the year for the students. During the ceremony their efforts during the year are rewarded and they are given the opportunity to make speeches and deliver poems. The ceremony for this year is to be held on 19th September 1982 at the centre beginning at 2 p.m. All those interested are welcome to attend.

Muslim Community Centre Annual  
Report 1982  
Markazi Jamiat Ahl-e-Hadith UK 20  
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