

LONDON

Europe's Muslim Capital

It is now official: London is the Muslim capital of Europe.

Nearly one out of every ten Londoner is a Muslim. And with more than 50 nationalities living in the capital, only Makkah and Madinah can claim to be more diverse. But while this is reflected in daily life and in the streets of the Capital, Muslim representation and access to resources is sadly, negligible.

However, in London, this rises to 8.46 percent (or over 700,000) of the capital's population - nearly half of the total British Muslim population.

Technically this means that one person out of every eleven in London is a Muslim. In comparison Hindus consist of 4.07 percent, Jews 2.09 percent and Sikhs are 1.45 percent. Yet the



Considering the numbers, the under-representation of London's Muslim communities in the corridors of power is, to say the least, surprising. None of the 65 London MPs is a Muslim. The story is the same with the Greater London Authority.

According to figures released in February 2003 by the Office of National Statistics Muslims are the largest minority faith community nationally: 2.7 percent (or nearly 1.6m) of the total population in Britain are Muslims.

profile of all the other communities in the affairs of the city are much more higher and pronounced than the Muslims.

London's Muslim community is widespread across the capital. Every single borough has a Muslim presence. The top five are Tower Hamlets (36.4%) Newham (24.3%), Waltham Forest (15.1%), Hackney (13.8%) and Brent (12.3%). The uniqueness of the community is further enhanced by the fact that it is multi-ethnic racial and multi-cultural.



Ant-war demonstrators in London

Members of the Muslim community in London come from all the four corners of the world and speak in nearly a dozens of tongues: Moroccans in Ladbroke Grove, West Africans in Peckham, Somalis in the north, Bangladeshis and Pakistanis in the East, Bosnians, Kosovans, Afghanis and Iraqis in the West.

Everywhere you go in the capital one is challenged by the community's diversity and genuine plurality. Yet this richness has hardly been recognised or appreciated by the authorities.

While Muslims participate in events such as the Notting Hill Carnival, St Patrick's Day and huge Diwali celebrations there is, for instance, a conspicuous absence of any major event to acknowledge and celebrate their culture and heritage.

To a large extent the problem has been the reluctance particularly by the race industry to accept and respect the Muslim identity. The Race Relations Act of 1976 effectively made the Muslim community invisible by refusing to accept any other identity for the visible minorities except those based on colour and race.

So Muslims, a complex multi-ethnic community, was ruthlessly pressurised to either be 'Black' or 'Asians'. But as events from the Anglo-Rushdie affair, the first Gulf War and then Bosnia showed, for the vast majority of Muslims it was their faith which was the determining factor in

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Muslim Londoners join anti-war demonstrators

On Saturday, March 22, 2003, hundreds of thousands gathered on the streets of London to protest against the War on Iraq.

Organised by the "Stop the War Coalition", this was the second rally in as many months.

Government figures claimed only 200,000 marchers. Given its record of grossly understating the size of such protests from the Countryside Rally in 2000 to the February 15 March Against The War this year no-one gives this much credence. Estimates from those attending reckoned that it was about half the size of February's. Then there were about two million protesters; so this time, 250,000 seems a conservative guess. Like their co-religionists from elsewhere in the kingdom, London's Muslims are highly sceptical about the reasons for the war.

Few support Saddam Hussein, the Iraqi leader, but fewer still believe the rationale put about by George Walker Bush, the American leader, or Anthony Blair, the British Prime Minister.

In many ways the anti-war demo managed to bring together people in a way that no Home Office or CRE effort has ever managed.

An Englishman dressed in "ratcatcher" hat, Barbour coat, and moleskin

trousers, who could have been left over from the Countryside Alliance's "Liberty and Livelihood" March, holding a Muslim Association of Britain placard in his hand and showing it to his wife. Gesturing to the text, which read "Freedom for Palestine", he said to the lady, "You see, this sums up what it's all about".

Others believed that the War is all about oil. Others that it was about the lucrative post bellum "reconstruction" contracts that will be up for grabs and in GWB's gift. Yet others that the War has been done as pay-offs to General Eisenhower's "military-industrial" complex.

Nobody thought the War was to bring democracy, freedom from tyranny, or escape from the shadow of weapons of mass destruction to Iraq let alone to the wider Middle East given that the region's principal, and possibly only, nuclear power - Israel - is not a target of America's over-hyped indignation.

What it will bring to London's - and Britain's - Muslims is higher taxation. And heightened insecurity as anti-terrorism is hyped.

Core Members of the LMC

AMAL TRUST

15H Bourne House
Westbourne Grove
London W2
Tel: 020 7727 5882
www.amaltrust.org
Contact: Hashim Charif

An umbrella organisation which undertakes several activities for young Muslims and non-Muslims alike, including education, sports, visits to prisons and resettlement of Muslim refugees. Also hold conferences and seminars in the UK and elsewhere.

AN-NISA SOCIETY

85 Wembley Hill Road
Wembley HA9
Tel: 020 8902 0100
Contact: Humera Khan

London's premier women-led organisation working for families. Over two decades of campaign and advocacy for Muslim rights and identity. Pioneers in Islamic counselling, education and social policies. Offer advice and provide activities for families and young people

BLACK LONDONERS FORUM

18a Victoria Park Square
Bethnal Green
London E2
Tel: 020 8709 9781
info@blacklondon.org.uk
Contact: Ruhul Turafder

The BLF is a proactive organisation which aims to influence decision-making at all levels of London governance.

FORUM AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA AND RACISM (FAIR)

Suite 19, Jubilee Business Centre
Exeter Road
London NW2 3UF
Tel: 020 8453 7504
Contact: Ssamar Mashadi

Seeks to promote better awareness of Islam, monitor and respond to cases of Islamophobia in the media and popular culture, and support and assist victims of religious and racial discrimination.

INDIAN MUSLIM FEDERATION

Indian Muslim Federation Hall
Trinity Close, Leytonstone
London E11
Tel: 020 8558 6399
Contact: Irfan Mustafa

Community and advisory service. Also provide Asian elderly day care centre and ladies group.

ISLAMIC HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

PO Box 598 Wembley HA9
Tel: 020 8902 0888
www.ihr.org
Contact: Masoud Shadjareh

Formed in March 1997 IHRC works in the field of UK and global human rights issues. It is a campaigning and support platform against human rights abuse and Islamophobia

ISLAMIC FORUM EUROPE - LONDON

196 Mile End Road
London E1
Tel: 020 7423 9766
www.ife.webstar.co.uk
Contact: Numan Hussain

Da'wah organisation which organises educational and religious programmes for Muslims and non-Muslims throughout Europe.

ISLAMIC SOCIETY OF BRITAIN

PO Box 7539
Birmingham
B10 9AU
Tel: 0845 087 8766
www.isb.org.uk
Contact: Dr Zahoor Qurashi

Undertake da'wah. Hold camps, conferences and social events and other activities including national Islam Awareness Week.

LONDON CIVIC FORUM

18A Victoria Park Square
London E2 9PB
info@londoncivicforum.org.uk
Contact: Ajmal Masroor

The LVF engages the capital's civic society in the new governance of London through democratic debate and effective consultation with the Mayor and the Greater London Assembly.

MUSLIM CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTRE

244 Acklam Road
London W10
Tel: 020 8964 1496
Contact: Bashir Ebrahim Khan

Mosque and community centre. Runs courses and activities for the local community.

MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN (MCB)

PO Box 52
Wembley HA9 0XW
Tel: 020 8903 9024
www.mcb.org.uk
Contact: Dr Raheem Khan and Tanzim Wasti

An umbrella organisation of mosques and other institutions geared to promote consultation, co-operation and co-ordination on Muslim affairs throughout the UK. A service and representative body, working 'for the common good.'

MUSLIM DIRECTORY

65A Grosvenor Road
London W7 1HR
Tel: 020 8799 4455
www.muslimdirectory.co.uk
Contact: Naeem Darr

A London-based company producing UK's largest Muslim publication. Supported by all the major Muslim Organisations and by over 500 businesses, it includes a host of information not found in any other publication.

MUSLIM PARLIAMENT

109 Fulham Palace Road
London W6 8JA
Tel: 020 8563 1995
Contact: Dr Ghayasuddin Siddiqui

Community action organisation dealing with the affairs of Muslims in Britain and globally.

MUSLIM WELFARE HOUSE

233 Seven Sisters Road
Finsbury Park
London N4
Tel: 020 7263 3071
www.mwht.org.uk
Contact: Fadi Itani

A social, cultural and educational organisation that also runs a mosque.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AGAINST RACISM (NAAR)

28 Commercial Street
London E1
Tel: 020 7247 9907
www.naar.org.uk
Contact: Shahed Yunus

Campaign on issues of racism, consulting with statutory agencies and local government. Also run a student assembly on racism.

Q-NEWS

PO Box 4295
London W1A 7YH
www.q-news.com
Contact: Fuad Nahdi

Britain's leading Muslim magazine featuring news, current affairs, reviews, opinion and other issues affecting Muslims in Britain and worldwide.

YOUTH ACTION SCHEME

The Hailebury Centre
Ben Jonson Road
London E1
Tel: 020 7790 4450
Contact: Nasir Uddin

A major youth centre and project involved in providing sporting, educational and cultural services to the youth. Also involved in anti-drugs campaigns and community policing.

YOUNG MUSLIM ORGANISATIONS UK

94 Whitechapel Road
London E1
Tel: 020 7247 79187
www.ymouk.com
Contact: Junaid Ahmed and Abul Kalam

Youth organisation that holds study circles, seminars, conferences and youth camps.

YOUNG MUSLIMS UK

Markfield Da'wah Centre
Ratby Lane Markfield LE67
Tel: 0845 087 8766
www.ymuk.com
Contact: Imran Saithna

Undertake da'wah, hold seminars and conferences.

London Muslim Coalition Terms of Reference

Mission Statement

To work together for the welfare and well-being of London's Muslim communities in an atmosphere of mutual consultation and shared objectives.

Introduction

London Muslim communities constitute nearly ten percent of the city's population and has made significant contribution to the capital's well being and prosperity. Muslims have and are contributing towards enriching London's culture and its diversity. In many London boroughs there are numerous elected Muslim councillors and Mayors. With growing London Muslim population the call to articulate its needs and concerns in a unified and coherent manner increasingly became apparent.

The London Muslim Coalition (LMC) was founded on 3rd October 2001 to deal with the growing challenges facing communities at a time of increasing attacks and Islamophobia not just in London but in the UK as a whole as well as in Europe.

The purpose of the group is to devise shared objectives for discussion and to establish what are the fundamental issues for the Muslim communities in London. LMC will attempt to generate a sense of unanimity of purpose and thus provide opportunities for joint working. It is organic in its development and inclusive in terms of its structure and operation.

Aims

The main aims of the LMC are:

- To develop shared objectives for discussion and to establish what are the key issues for Muslim communities in London
- To agree on a practical consensual plan of action
- To actively engage in campaigns aimed at influencing policy in London and, when necessary, national level
- To secure representation in authorities and organisations which affect the lives of Muslim communities
- To reflect the concerns of grassroots communities
- To be inclusive in its structures and activities

Membership

Membership of the LMC:

- The LMC is an assembly of individuals and organisations working with or for Muslim communities in London.
- Working groups will take forward specific issues and tasks on behalf of the Coalition
- Membership of the working groups would be based on consensus
- Members of the LMC operate in a voluntary capacity and should not gain financially, either directly or indirectly through their involvement with the Coalition, so they should disclose any direct or indirect interest that could influence their judgement, and where necessary withdraw from meetings where a potential conflict of interest arises.

Structure

The organisation will be run on an open and democratic basis.

The London Muslim Coalition would like to thank the following for their contribution in producing this introductory publication.

Editorial Director Fuad Nahdi **Editorial Consultants** Daud Rosser-Owen, Kumar Murshid, Khalida Khan
Editorial Contributors Isla Rosser-Owen **Design** MDUK Media Ltd **Administrative Support** Imaan Williams **Advertising** Audrey King

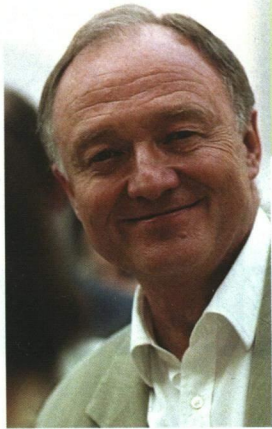
Views and opinions expressed, unless stated, are shared by the Coalition. A definitive guide to Muslim London is to be produced in May. The Coalition welcomes contribution that aims to enhance and inform the contribution of Muslims to the social, cultural, political and spiritual life of the capital.

The London Muslim Coalition can be contacted at:

The London Muslim Coalition c/o Amal Trust, 15H Bourne House, Westbourne Grove, London W2 4UA • imaan.williams@london.gov.uk

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Messages of Solidarity



Message from the Mayor

For far too long Muslims have not been properly represented in local and central Government, have suffered unacceptably high levels of deprivation and unemployment and have had their needs misunderstood or overlooked by public service providers. That is why I welcome the launch of the London Muslim Coalition and will be working with a range of Muslim Organisations to ensure that the Greater London Authority fully meets the needs and aspirations of London's Muslim communities.

In the context of the present war, I am giving high priority to working with Sir John Stevens, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, to assure the Muslim communities that there will be zero tolerance of racism towards Muslims or Islamophobia in London. I have also written to newspaper editors and London's headteachers asking them to play their part in promoting good community relations with Muslim communities.

Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London



Message from the Muslim Council of Britain

The emergence of the London Muslim Coalition (LMC) as a result of the events of 11th September 2001 and its aftermath is significant for Muslims of London. The recent census report has reassured that almost half of 1.6 million Muslims in Britain live in London and Muslims constitute a significant proportion of London's overall population.

MCB and some of its affiliates have been working with others to build the foundation of LMC so that this Coalition complements the work of existing Muslim organisations, including MCB's 'London Affairs Committee'. As you are aware that MCB is the largest representative Muslim umbrella group that has been working with over 350 plus affiliates and other organisations to bring a qualitative change for Muslims locally, regionally and nationally. The following are just a few areas for your information where MCB has with God's grace contributed with regard to London.

- Supported many organisations, mosques, Women's Associations, Education & Cultural Project to access funds from the LDA and enabled the formation of some Consortia.
- Have given "capacity building" support to more than 20 other organisations in London.
- Responded to Government consultation papers and helped form bodies related with Muslim interest.
- Took lead in campaigning to secure commitment to fair and equal treatment of faith groups from statutory authorities, a campaign praised by Office of Deputy Prime Minister.
- Currently we are currently carrying out comprehensive survey of London's Local Strategic Partnerships to identify faith involvement and survey of mosques and Muslim community groups in London.
- Constantly engaged with organs of central government, media establishments and church and other bodies to look after the interest of our community, locally and nationally.

Our strength lies in the fact that, along with many things, we do not duplicate other organisations' or institutions' work. We are heartened to learn that LMC too is also working on this ethos. We look forward to working with LMC in playing a significant role in the affairs of London.

Iqbal AKM Sacranie, OBE
Secretary General



Message from the Muslim College

London is one of the great cities of the world. The city's landmarks are among the most popular and recognisable in the Muslim world. Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, London Bridge, Buckingham Palace - are all respected symbols familiar to Muslims from Kano

to Kuala Lumpur, Aden to Banja Luka.

Recent statistics have confirmed the fact that London is the Muslim capital of Europe. With nearly 700,000 Muslims - half of the British total - the capital is also the powerhouse of British Islam. Wherever you go it is impossible to escape Muslim influence and contribution to London's social, cultural and spiritual life.

London's Muslim communities are an example in vibrancy and dynamism: they come from more than 50 countries and speak in many tongues. Their contribution - from coffee and kebab houses to mosques and community centres - have greatly enriched the city.

The emergence of the London Muslim Coalition is much overdue and a welcome development. The idea that a group of Muslim Londoners have organised themselves with the sole aim of working for the welfare and benefit of all the inhabitants of this magnificent city is inspiring and challenging.

The LMC must be given all the support it deserves in its efforts to achieve its stated goals and objectives. One is impressed by its open-ness and inclusiveness - necessary if it is to genuinely represent the hopes, concerns, fears and aspirations of one of the most diverse Muslim communities in the world.

The presence of young people and particularly young women in the LMC is indication of both the organisation's relevancy and serious intent.

I wish the coalition the best in its endeavour to make London a much better city: one cloaked in humanity, justice and genuine tolerance.

Shaykh Dr Zaki Badawi, OBE
Principal, The Muslim College



Message from House of Lords

London is the most beautiful Muslim city in the world. The variety and diversity of the city's people and culture is indeed unique. With nearly every one Londoner out of ten a Muslim you cannot escape the capital's distinctively Muslim identity. For a Muslim, London is not an alien

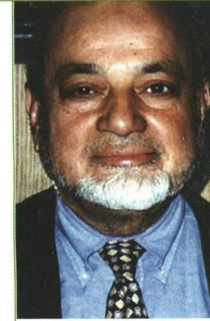
city: it is full of halal life - buzzing with social and cultural events and throbbing with the *adhans* [call to prayers]. Not surprising it is home to nearly half of Britain's Muslims and the destination of nearly half a million Muslims from all parts of the world every year. The city has much to offer to both its inhabitants and its visitors.

The emergence of the London Muslim Coalition is indication that Muslim Londoners are rising to make legitimate claims on their city. One can only hope that the LMC will be the effective body needed to ensure that Muslim Londoners are treated as equal members of the London community.

Bringing together such a diverse and able group of people and organisations is remarkable. But as a Londoner I expect nothing less: this is a city populated by remarkable people and the Muslim contribution in all sectors of life has been amazing.

With the launch of the LMC there is now no excuse for those claiming to work for a fairer and just London to continue ignoring and neglecting the rights and needs of the city's its diverse Muslim communities. I wish the LMC prosperity and success in its aim to work for the well-being of such a great city.

Baroness Uddin of Bethnal Green
House of Lords



Message from The Union of Muslim Organisations

Muslims are always encouraged to be together and work together for the benefit of their communities. The Union of Muslim Organisations of the UK and Eire welcomes the launch of the London Muslim Coalition which it has supported from the beginning.

The LMC is a good representation of this important Islamic principle.

As the premier, largest and most established Muslim umbrella organisation in the country, the UMO has always been concerned about the needs and concerns of Muslim Londoners.

Working for London is an exciting and challenging task. The city's diversity and vibrancy and the Muslim contribution to the shaping of its very soul is something we can all be proud of.

During the last thirty years the UMO has served British Muslims by championing a clear and comprehensive agenda aimed at the benefit of all society. We hope that the LMC will join hands with us and work together for the attainment of those noble goals and aspirations.

It is the duty of each one of us to make sure that we try to live our lives according to the teachings of Islam. If we do that it will be beneficial not only to us and our relatives but also to our neighbours and friends. The LMC should strive to create an environment in which London's 700,000-strong Muslim community can lead their lives as instructed by their faith.

The UMO hopes and pray that the LMC grows and prosper. We look forward to a future of continued cooperation in being of service for our faith and communities.

Dr Syed Pasha
Secretary General
Union of Muslim Organisations



Abelan Wasablan Welcome to Muslim London

London is the undiscovered Muslim city of the world. With nearly 200 mosques and over 300 madrassahs [supplementary schools] it is a dynamic metropolis throbbing with possibilities. In its streets mingle 700,000 Muslims from more than 50 nations speaking in as many languages. Niqab or hijab, Miss Selfridges or Tekbir, the diversity is awesome - and inspiring. For nowhere in the world, east or west of Makkah and Medina, is such a tapestry of the Ummah to be found.

Everywhere you go you cannot escape the Muslim presence - from the atmosphere in Green Lanes, the neon lights of Edgware Road, the colours of Brick Lane, and the aroma of Shepherds Bush. But it is more than just a presence: Muslims in London provide the city with that added spice that makes the otherwise dreary streets and airy dazzle with life and character.

You could start with a trip to Golbourne Road in Ladbroke Grove and have a cup of Moroccan mint tea. Or perhaps have an Iranian meal in Kensington or an Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi feast in Brick Lane. For Afghanistani go to Neasden, Somali visit Tower Hamlets

influenced by Muslim design and is reflected on the High Street from *kurta* tops, embroidered bags and shoes to pashmina shawls and fashion accessories in Accessorize, Monsoon and Laura Ashley.

Observant young Muslims will notice the 'chikan' embroidery on shawls and scarves sold in boutiques and high street stores resembles what their grandmothers wore traditionally. Likewise the intricate embroideries on the now fashionable High Street 'chic scarves' are exact duplicates of what used to be on hijabs worn by women in the Gulf.

Islamic arts and crafts are the hottest statement in home furnishings and design: Selfridges, Liberty and IKEA

make a roaring trade in rugs and carpets from the Muslim world and the airwaves are choc-a-bloc with TV DIY programmes showing you how to makeover your home to the Moroccan look or the exotic 'Indian' look which is more often than

not Islamically inspired.

Muslim workers keep London ticking and to make it the vibrant and buzzing 24-hour city it has now become. Your pizza delivery man bringing you your midnight 'magherita' is likely to be Muslim as is the minicab driver that brings back home all those London clubbers.

Imagine if all Muslim Londoners were to leave the city en masse the city would not only turn to its Middle Age bleakness but will actually grind to a halt: it would, literally, die.

But just like the way Muslim origins of fashion, design wear and home furnishings have been tipped out of the public consciousness, the physical human Muslim presence in London has also been - for a long time - rendered officially invisible. That is until the Office of National Statistics finally gave in to two decades of Muslim lobbying and asked a question on religious identity in the last Census in 2001.

It is now official, according to the results revealed on 13 February 2003, that London is home to the largest and most ethnically diverse Muslim population in the country. It is in fact the most populous Muslim city in Europe. Nearly half of the total numbers of British Muslims live in London. According to the 2001 Census results, at least 8.5 percent (610,980) of the city's total population is Muslim.

Every single borough in London has a Muslim presence the top five being Tower Hamlets (36.4%), Newham (24.3%), Waltham Forest (15.1%), Hackney (13.8%) and Brent (12.3%).

Despite the fact that the Muslim communities of London are racially and ethnically diverse they can boast of being the most socially and culturally integrated in the country. United by a set of beliefs there are definitely the most socially and spiritually

cohesive and integrated communities in town. Muslims have more inter-ethnic and inter-cultural marriages than any other group of people.

London, as the capital of the former British Empire, still holds unique sway in developments in several Muslim countries. The BBC World Service based at Bush House, Aldwych, continues to broadcast in at least 17 Muslim languages from Pushtun to Hausa, Farsi to Behasa Malay.

Most of the leading newspapers and magazines in the Arab Muslim world have main offices based in London. *Al-Hayat*, *Al-Sbarq al-Awsat* and *Al-Quds* are examples of those who have their headquarters in the capital.

Both Al-Jazeera and MBC can trace their origins from London as can hundreds of journalists and academics who studied or worked here.

It has also been noted that London is a full of dissidents from the Muslim world. Many people fleeing from the Muslim world have taken advantage of the capital's reputation of being a city that respects freedom of expression and speech and, in a way, 'a mother of all dissidents' historically.

A visitor to London will be surprised at the adventures its streets and alleys can provide - historically, culturally, politically and spiritually.

Welcome to London, where the halal meets the west.

London, as the capital of the former British Empire, still holds unique sway in developments in several Muslim countries.

and Wembley, and Iraqis and other Arabs go to Westminster.

Or you may like to look at the fashions in the countless high street shops offering the latest in Muslim inspired fashion wear - our very own Dame Judi Dench wears Muslim fashions as does Cherie Blair. But they are not alone: every fashion era in the past to the present has been

The London Muslim Coalition BROCHURE OUT IN JUNE

A unique publication that will revolutionize the way London is perceived. The most definitive guide to the Muslim history of the capital covering over 350 years.

From the Docklands to the City, trade and wars, arts and crafts - the story of Muslim London as never told before.

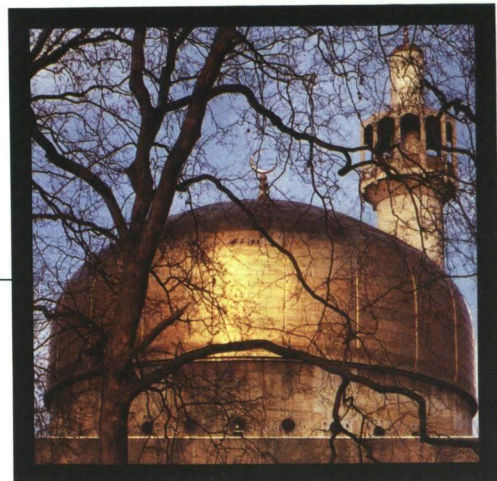
But the LMCB is not designed for the shelf: it will contain practical advice on where to pray and shop, visit and tour, eat and walk.

It will take you to parts of London other guides don't even know exist.

For more information contact the LMC at:

THE LONDON MUSLIM COALITION
c/o Amal Trust, 15H Bourne House, Westbourne Grove, London W2 4UA
imaan.williams@london.gov.uk

London MOSQUES



London owns more mosques than any other city in the Western world north of the Bosphorus itself. Many of them have colourful histories.

Regent's Park Mosque was built on the site of Hanover Lodge as part of an exchange for land in Cairo to build an Anglican cathedral. The Azizia Mosque in Hackney was originally a Victorian cinema known as "The Moorish Alhambra". Woking Mosque, although just outside London, was the main focal point for the London Muslim community at the turn of the 20th century, and until the late 1960s. And it was through the personalities of the Woking Muslim Mission that land and money was granted by King George VI and his government in 1944 for the building of the Regent's Park Mosque. These two projects were soon to be followed by the opening of the East London Mosque in 1941, which remains one of London's oldest and most active community institutions. Until the last two or three decades, many "mosques" were confined to small buildings and were in reality only prayer-rooms. However, the community now enjoys spacious, new buildings with some very good facilities for both men and women, and new mosques are being built all the time.

Shah Jehan Mosque

149 Oriental Road, Woking, Surrey

Woking Mosque was designed by Dr Leitner, an Orientalist of Hungarian origin, who is said to have taken his inspiration for it from the Taj Mahal at Agra in India. It was named the Shah Jehan mosque after its main benefactor, Her Highness, the Begum Shah Jehan, ruler of Bhopal State. Although completed in the 1890s, it was left unused until Khwaja Kamaluddin discovered it in 1913.

In 1913, the Woking Muslim Mission was established, and through their work gained many souls for Islam. It worked closely with the Notting Hill Muslim group and many of London's leading Muslims not only attended Woking Mosque for major functions, but contributed to the publications printed there. It was again through Woking Mosque that a great number of important visitors from all over the Muslim world were able to appreciate Muslim life while abroad, and were able to come into contact with the many scholars, activists and enthusiasts of the community at that time.

Woking Mosque remained active as its former self into the late 1960s, when its publications ceased. The old management of the Woking Muslim Mission was attacked by new arrivals from India for its supposed "Qadiani" tendencies. A coup d'etat occurred and a new management committee was installed. It remains a functioning and busy mosque to this day, though with changed emphasis and different priorities.

London Jamia Masjid

59 Brick Lane, London E1

Brick Lane Mosque is another interesting historical anomaly, and a true reflection of the various communities that have inhabited the area at one point or other. It was originally established in 1743 as a Huguenot Church - at that time the area was inhabited by Huguenot refugees fleeing persecution in France. In 1809, it became a Wesleyan chapel (a Methodist group), and about 90 years later it was turned into the Spitalfields Great Synagogue for the Orthodox Jewish community. Finally, it reached mosque status in 1976 and it is still the main mosque of "Banglatown", whose congregation is mainly Bangladeshi in origin.

Suleymaniye Mosque

212-216 Kingsland Road, London E2 8AX

The mosque was officially opened in October 1999 and is said to be one of the largest and most beautiful mosque in Europe. It took three years to build and cost £7 million. The mosque is open to all Muslims, although it was established by the Turkish community in North London. The mosque has been designed so that 3,000 people can pray at one time. There are separate facilities for women. There are special programmes for holy nights (qandil) and days, and for Eid when prayers are held in groups (jam'at) and nearly 5,000 people attend. The building houses an Islamic Cultural Centre with conference rooms, dining halls, kitchen, book shop and a youth hostel with boarding for 100 students. Quranic, *Taalim* and *Tafsir* lectures are given on a regular basis.

Al-Khoei Foundation

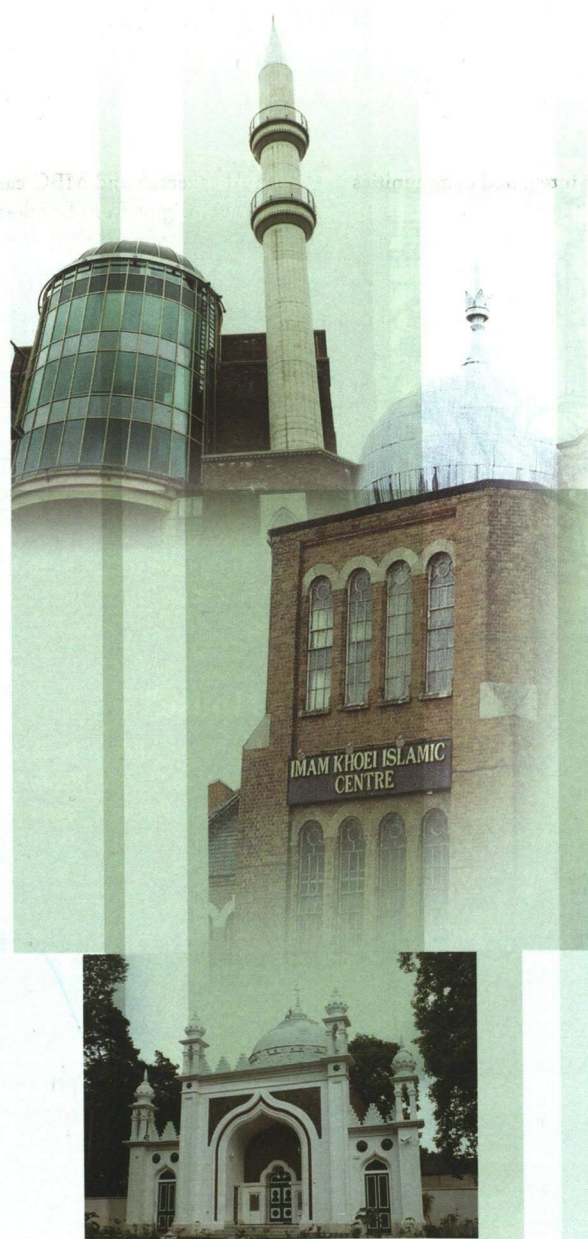
Chevening Road, London NW6 6TN

The Al-Khoei Foundation was first established in Swansea for the many Shi'as settled in Wales. The Foundation opened a centre in London in 1993 in premises which were originally built as a Jewish school and synagogue. A great number of Shi'as use the mosque, and it has become the equivalent of the Great Mosque of the Shia's in Britain. The Foundation divides its activities into three areas: religious, social and cultural. Arabic, Farsi, Urdu and English are the languages spoken in the Foundation during its religious and social programmes. Uniquely, there is a counselling services provided by the centre dealing with all kinds of problems, especially those connected with family matters.

Mayfair Islamic Centre

19 Hertford St, London W1Y 7DB

The mosque was founded by a Qatari organisation called the Qasim bin Mohammed Charity and was (and still is) funded privately. It can accommodate 500 worshippers. Facilities are provided for women only for Friday prayers. Besides catering for all congregation prayers, the mosque also organises courses in *Tajwid*, Arabic, *Fiqh* and *Tafsir*. The mosque is situated in a mainly non-residential part of Central London. The congregation tends to be mostly made up of Arab Muslims including waiters and millionaires working and living in the area.



Historical Muslim London

London's connection with the Muslim world goes back centuries. From commerce to diplomacy, scholarship to coffee houses the city is full of sites and memories of great achievement and achievers. More and more Muslim Londoners are becoming aware of the contributions made in the past to the capital by their forefathers.

TRADE LINKS

Much of the trade between London and Morocco in the 16th Century can be attributed to the famous English "sweet tooth". The first shipment of goods from Morocco in 1574 contained 300 tons of refined sugar, 220 tons of molasses, 1400 pounds of sweetmeats, 600 pounds of marmalade, 6 tons of dates, and 30 tons of almonds.

IMPACT ON DAILY LIFE

Who could imagine what British life would be like without sugar, tea or coffee? What would the traditional British Christmas cake taste like without the thick layer of marzipan underneath the frosted icing? Indeed, where would the marzipan be without the almonds? And what about marmalade on toast? In fact, in terms of food, and a number of other things too, Britain would still be in the Dark Ages had it not started its trade with the Muslims. Other things that may not be so normal, but that are familiar enough, can also be linked back to this crossing of cultures: the cheque, cotton, candy, taffeta, silk, satin, sherbet, ketchup, dungarees, caravans, gymkhanas, bungalows, bazaars, oranges and tambourines.

Among the commodities that was much traded into London was leather from Spain, in particular, velum and goatskins for bookbinding, and, of course, for shoes, saddles, bridles, and harness. Finished leather-goods were much in demand, especially the tooled kind associated with Cordoba - hence the word Cordovan, which got corrupted to Cordwaine, and leathergood makers came to be called Cordwainers with their own City of London livery company like the Leathersellers and Saddlers.

KING JOHN AND ISLAM

King John went so far as to offer to convert to Islam and marry the daughter of Muhammad al-Nasir, the Almohad ruler, at Seville. The only account of this was written up by Catholic churchmen, and as John was excommunicated at the time, Mathew Paris's second and third-hand record can hardly be considered objective.

DOCKLANDS

The street names of many of the roads and avenues of the Docklands area, whether old or new, are perhaps the best indicators of its spice-riden, eastern heritage. Two Wapping street names that come to mind are Cinnamon Street and Penang Street. St Katherine's Docks boasts ownership of Cape Yard. Manilla Street and Taeping Street can be found on the Isle of Dogs. The Blackwall Tunnel Approach runs past a certain Mauritius Road, and Bermondsey, near to Tower Bridge, has a district known as Leather Market, which contains Tanner Street, Morocco Street and Leathermar Street. Limehouse, one-time haven of tea-clippers coming in from the China Sea, has a bigger variety in West India Dock Road, West India Quay, Saracen Street, Nutmeg Lane, Saffron Avenue, Oregano Drive, Clove Crescent, and, of course, East India Dock Road.

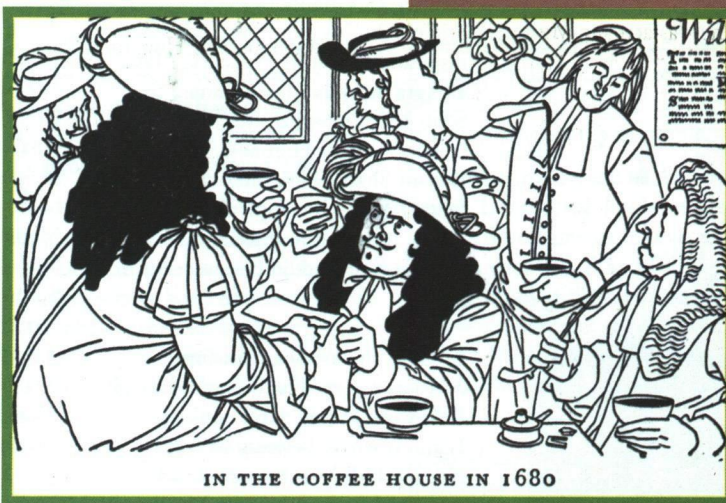
THE EAST INDIA COMPANY

The impact the East India Company had on an empirical level is known about. Many people view it as facilitating the rule of India and its markets. On another level, however, a fundamental impact that this company had, as well as all of the others, on British society was the in-flow of thousands of people from all over the world. These various vessels were a facilitator to global travel and cross-cultural exchange for hundreds of years.

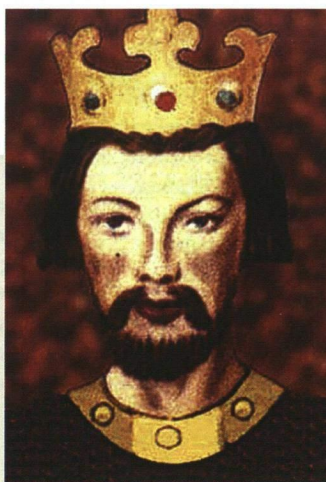
In 1813, Thomas William Plummer wrote that, "scarcely any part of the British community is distinct from some personal or collateral interest in the welfare of the East India Company".

ABU BAKR SIDDIQ

Edward Doulan, formerly Abu Bakr Siddiq of Jenne (in the Empire of Mali), was an 'alim taken as a slave and sent to Jamaica, where, because he was literate, he eventually became the estate stock-keeper recording everything in Arabic. He was discovered there by an Anglican vicar, and Abu Bakr Siddiq returned to England with him. On reaching English soil at that time, he was legally a free man. Eventually, having been paraded round London society for a while as a bit of a curiosity, he was aided in his return to Mali. Little is heard of him thereafter, but most hope that he lived happily ever after.



IN THE COFFEE HOUSE IN 1680



Ambassadors to London

The ups and downs of diplomacy in the Tudor to Stuart period brought many an ambassador to London, mainly from the Ottoman Empire and Morocco, and they were often accompanied by English converts to Islam, or "renegados" from Christianity. The Diary of John Evelyn notes that a "Renegado Englishman" escorted Moroccan ambassador Muhammad bin Hadu (left) to London in 1682. Depending on the fashion of the time, these envoys were either welcomed at Court with pomp and celebration, or never had the pleasure of an initial meeting. Either way, "moors", "saracens" and "Turks" found themselves inserted into the plays and novels of the day, and were mostly portrayed as colourful and fairly evil characters.

The London Coffee House

The origin of coffee can be traced back to Mocha in the Yemen, and it can only have found its way to Britain by way of the Muslim world and its Mediterranean trade routes.

The Ottoman inspired Coffee-House took London society by storm, to the extent that most social events focused around them from the meetings of political dissidents and artists to the launching of new inventions. Frequent visitors often adopted the turban and other such eccentricities to blend in with the decor. This and similar occurrences worried certain sections of society, and so in 1674 there arose "The Women's Petition Against Coffee" as they complained that their husbands were turning "as unfruitful as the deserts", or as other commentators have called it, "turning Turk". Other petitions ensued, and even Charles II thought it wise to abolish coffee and other foreign drinks, although ban did not last long.

The "Great Turk Coffee House"

(also known as "Morat Ye Great") in Exchange Alley in 1662 is a case in point. Apparently, inside could be found a bust of "Sultan Almurath IV" himself, "the most detestable tyrant that ever ruled the Ottoman Empire". The customer could not only find coffee, tea and tobacco here, but also chocolate and a range of sherbets, which, according to the Mercurius Publicus (12-19 March 1662), were "made in Turkie; made of lemons, roses, and violets perfumed". Another chronicler of the time has suggested that "Morat" was actually the name of the proprietor himself.

The Hindoostanee



The Hindoostanee of 1810, London's first curry house, was set up by a Mr Sake Dean Mahomet who travelled here from Bengal. He settled first in Ireland, where he married his Irish wife, and then moved to London where he started his elaborately decorated coffee-house at 34 George Street, off Portman Square (now a sushi bar). The coffee-house also offered the Hookah pipe. His proprietorship does not seem to have lasted too long. He moved on to establish a successful Indian Vapour Baths and Shampooing Establishment in Brighton Pavilion, and soon after became King George IV's "shampooing surgeon". The Hindoostanee, however, certainly lasted until 1833, when it is last mentioned in accounts.

HALAL BLUE PLAQUES

The Blue Plaques Scheme was started in 1867 by the Royal Society of Arts to honour noteworthy people who had contributed to society, history or the local area. The Plaques are being put up all the time, and English Heritage along with local boroughs can be approached with any nominations, either via their websites, or by calling English Heritage at the following number: 0207-973-3794. Local authority archives can confirm address details if otherwise unknown, and also the relevant dates. Muslim London has yet to be mapped, and only three "halal blue plaques" exist as yet:

Sir Mohammed Ali Jinnah (1876-1948), the Founder of Pakistan.

Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (1817-1898), Muslim Reformer and Scholar.

Mustapha Pasha Reschid (1800-1858), Turkish Statesman and Reformer. However, there are many of those related to things Islamic, such as those of **Lord Leighton**, **Washington Irving**, and **Thomas Carlyle**.

Some suggested Blue Plaques are: **Al-Hajj 'Abdullah Yusuf Ali CBE** Scholar and Quran Translator, who lived at 34 Woodside and at 3 Mansel Road, in Wimbledon. **Sir Abu Bakar Tafawa Balewa** former Prime Minister of Nigeria. **Al-Hajj Hedley**

Mahmoud Mobarek

Churchward, Theatre Painter and Sketcher, Drury Lane.

Al-Hajj Lord Headley al-Farooq,

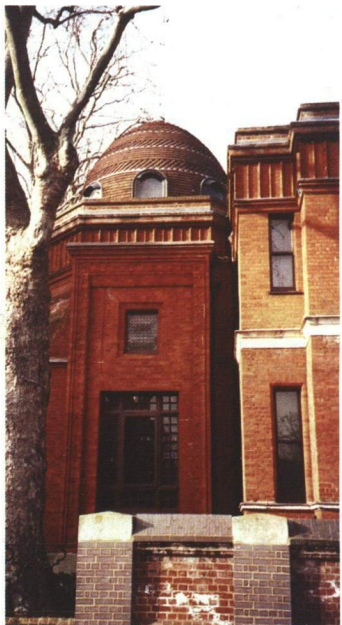
Sir Muhammad Iqbal, Poet and Educationalist. **Prince Sami**

Osmanli, surviving member of Ottoman Royal family, who lived at the London Visitors' Hotel. And there are hundreds more who equally deserve to be commemorated.



LORD LEIGHTON

Artist **Lord Leighton** designed and decorated his house in a heavily Islamicised style, with the help of William Morris's wallpaper, Sir Edward Burne-Jones, and William de Morgan. His close friend, Sir Richard Burton, the explorer about whom there is confusion as to whether he was actually Muslim, brought back Iznik and Damascus tiles to Lord Leighton for use in his **Arab Hall**. The Arab Hall is itself typical of the over-elaborate Victorian house, and combines in one domed niche the Andalusian, Mughul, Mamluk, Syrian-Byzantine, and the Turkish styles for which the Islamic tradition is known. His house has been preserved in its original state and can still be viewed to this day.



HEDLEY CHURCHWARD

One of the elite London circle of Orientalist artists, a Drury Lane theatre artist by the name of Hedley Churchward, took the plunge and converted to Islam, eventually settling in Cape Town with his Egyptian wife, where he is still famous to this day. His extravagant stage scenes and use of props were famous all over the world, particularly in London, where he was known also in Sadlers Wells and Shakespeare's Globe, among others.

NOTTING HILL PRAYER HALL

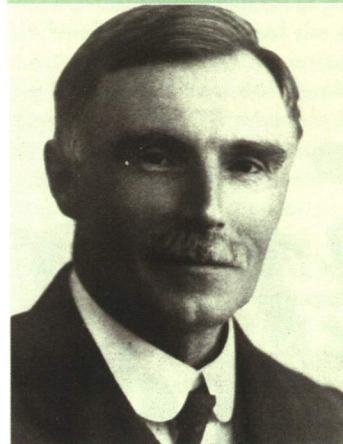
Strangely enough, one of Britain's leading modern organisations, the Union of Muslim Organisations of the UK and Eire, is situated at No.109 Campden Hill Road, right next door to London's first ever mosque, the Notting Hill Prayer Hall and Centre at No.111.

THE ORIENTAL AND TURKISH MUSEUM

Amongst *Bryant Lillywhite's* list of London's Coffee Houses, can be found an anomaly. Madame Tussaud's is not, in fact, London's first wax museum. Housed in *St. George's Gallery* of Knightsbridge in 1854 could be found **The Oriental and Turkish Museum**. The figures were crafted by James Boggi and offered, "models from Eastern life, with costumes, arms and implements. Set scenes of Turkish baths, coffee-shops, and bazaars; a wedding, respasts, and councils; the palace, the harem, and the divan; street scenes..."

Translators of the Holy Text

Both the translators of the world's most read Quran in English were Londoners



Marmaduke Muhammad Pickthall

(1875-1936) *Writer, Novelist, Linguist and Translator of the Quran*

Marmaduke Pickthall started to learn Arabic at an early age, having travelled to Palestine by way of Cairo to stay with some family friends, after failing to perform at school. Here he first fell in love with the Islamic world, and although tempted he was not to convert for another 20 years. The Shaykh al-'ulama of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus had advised him against a hasty conversion.

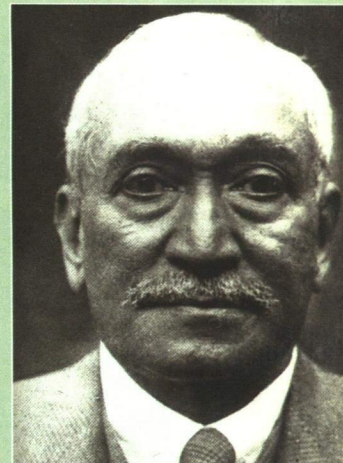
On his return to England he married Muriel Smith, who was also to convert to Islam a few years after her husband. Meanwhile he gained acclaim as a London writer, and published many articles and short stories.

At the age of 43 he was called up and stationed on the East Coast with the 17th Hampshires. In 1917 he also proclaimed himself publicly to be a Muslim, and thereafter became involved in the British Islamic Society in Notting Hill, and he also started to write for the journal, *Islamic Review and Modern India*. He lectured at the Muslim Literary Society, and became Imam of the London Mosque in Campden Hill Road, from where he also ran the Islamic Information Bureau which published the weekly *Muslim Outlook*. 1920 took Pickthall to India, where he initially worked as Editor of *The Bombay Chronicle*. Later, as a resident of Hyderabad, he took care of the Nizam's affairs, and then in 1928 took two years paid leave to complete his translation of the *Quran*. He returned to England in 1935 due to ill health. In May 1936, he died of coronary thrombosis, to be much lamented by the Muslims of India and Britain alike. He is buried at Brookwood Cemetery.

Al-Hajj Abdullah Yusuf Ali CBE

(1872-1953) *Political Activist, Scholar and Translator of the Quran*

Born in 1872 to Khan Bahadur Yusuf Ali, Al-Hajj Abdullah was educated at Bombay University and at St John's College, Cambridge. He was at the Bar at Lincolns Inn in 1896. He was Vice-President of the World Congress of Faiths (1937) and Delegate to the League of Nations (1928). He married Masuma Getrude Mawbery in 1921 and was awarded an MBE (Civil) 1917.



Abdullah Yusuf Ali also lectured and wrote extensively about India and, in his view, the need for social and institutional reform. He had started writing by this stage, and had also started to deliver a series of lectures in London. He was soon elected not only to the Royal Society of Arts but also to the Royal Society of Literature and proved very popular within British academic circles. Unfortunately his flitting between India and London eventually took its toll on his marriage, which ended in divorce in 1912 and from which had issued three sons and a daughter. After this time, Yusuf Ali's career although very successful became chequered with the unsettled events of the time, which began to come to a head with the arrival of the First World War.

Yusuf Ali decided to leave the Indian Civil Service in 1914 and had a brief return to Chiswick, London, where he again left his family and published a series of *Progressive Islam Pamphlets* and contributed to the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. His time in London included being involved in securing the land for the Regent's Park Mosque.

Abdullah Yusuf Ali is probably best known for his popular interpretation and commentary of the *Quran*, which was published in serials between 1934 and 1937. This has been reproduced over and over again since that time, and its success overshadows the man behind the magnum opus. After visiting India again, he returned to London to live out the last days of his life, disillusioned and disappointed. He was living in poverty and died alone in St Stephen's Hospital, Fulham on 10th December 1953. He is buried in Brookwood Cemetery.



The Orientalist painting, called "Musical Reverie" by Alois Schonn

THE AGE OF THE ORIENTALISTS

Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert were both great Orientalists. Empirical politics aside, this drove Prince Albert to a number of inspired endeavours, such as the Great Exhibition of the Works and Industry of All Nations in 1851, which by all accounts displayed wondrous things from all over the world. Although on the one hand it was supposed to be a celebration of all that the Empire had to offer, on the other hand it could also be viewed as one of the first multi-cultural exhibitions as it opened the minds of London society to the rest of the world.

Things to do in Muslim London

There is plenty to see and visit in Europe's leading Muslim city. Whether it is museums or exhibition halls London has it all: one of the best collection of the Holy Book, weapons used by Muslim warriors in the past, and beautiful artefacts from all over the world. But London's Muslim attraction is not only about the past. For an adventurous visitor Muslim London is a journey into the exotic and the universal. No wonder more than 400,000 Muslim tourists visit the capital every year.



The British Library

96 Euston Road, NW1 2DB
020-7412-7676
www.bl.uk

The British Library holds millions of books and manuscripts, and in order to gain access to most of these you will have to obtain a British Library reading card. However, some older manuscripts and volumes are displayed to the public in the John Ritblat Gallery, where you can find along with the Magna Carta and a number of original literary texts, some illuminated Qurans and some interesting old maps. The British Library also houses what is probably the largest collection of stamps in the world, and it is estimated to have over 8 million. Among them can be found an important collection of stamps from the former colonies. The Library has the largest collection of Arabic books and manuscripts out-

side the Arab World, and also holds archives from the Oriental and India Office including the records of the East India Company. The British Library is also home to the National Sound Archive, which has many interesting examples of music and other recordings from the Muslim world.

Bramah Museum of Tea and Coffee

40 Southwark Street, SE1 1UN
020-7378-0222
www.bramahmuseum.co.uk

This museum, interestingly, occupies one of the area's former tea warehouses, Tamarind House. It exhibits a range of tea and coffee-making artefacts, accompanied by an historical guide to Britain's contact with tea and coffee. It also arranges seminars on tea, and sometimes coffee, every Friday. The museum shop sells a variety of good-quality teas, coffees, the correct equipment for making it, and a number of very interesting publications written by Mr Bramah himself.

The British Museum

Great Russell Street, WC1B
020-7323-8000
www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

This museum houses one of the best Islamic collections in the world, including the much talked about Coin of King Offa of Mercia. The Elgin Marbles and the Rosetta Stone can also be found here. The coins can

be found on the upper floor (rooms 68 and 69a); the Oriental collections are found on the Ground floor (rooms 33-34) and the upper floor (rooms 91-94); the Western Asiatic antiquities collections are also on the Ground floor (rooms 16-26); the basement (rooms 88-89), and the upper floor (rooms 51-59). The main Islamic gallery is on the Ground floor, room 34. Also of interest is the Ethnography department, formerly the Museum of Mankind. It is still being moved from its former home near Burlington Arcade and so is by no means complete, but certain items of interest are on display in room 35. The department also has educational programmes about the various collections and their countries of origin.



The Science Museum

Exhibition Road,
South Kensington, SW7 2DD
020-7942-4454
www.nmsi.ac.uk
(Open everyday 10am-6pm)

This is perhaps a better visit than going to the Royal College of Surgeons. It has a large number of

objects from all over the Muslim world as it traces the history of science in all its forms, including that of medicine, agriculture, astronomy, inventions, and so on. This museum is also much more fun for children or those who only hold a general interest in this area, as exhibitions include interactive and often cinematic displays. Again it has a good library which keeps reproductions of works by a number of Muslim scientists.

Leighton House Museum

12 Holland Park Road, W14 8LZ
020-7602-3316
www.rbkc.gov.uk
(Open everyday
except Tues 11am-5.30pm)

This house was built by Lord Leighton, a Pre-Raphaelite painter but an Orientalist at heart. It was built in an Oriental style, which includes Leighton's Arab Hall, apparently based on the banqueting Hall of the Moorish Palace of Palermo. The domed niche is festooned by original Iznik tiles and Damascene mosaics, *mashrabiyyahs*, Moroccan woodwork and stripey Mamluk painting. The shop also sells a number of interesting books about Islamic art and architecture, as well as about the Victorian house. Upstairs can be found some photographs of Sir Richard Burton, including one just after his death, and a number of contemporary exhibitions, mostly by Muslim or related artists and photographers.

National Maritime Museum

Romney Road,
Greenwich, SE10 9NF
020-8858-4422
www.nmm.ac.uk
(Open everyday 10am-5pm)

Apart from an extensive archives section and library, for which you need an appointment and permission to access, the museum has a variety of paintings, sketches and actual artefacts (mostly military but not always) from all over the world, relating to its sea-faring trade for the most part, but also to do with campaigns of the Royal Navy. This includes a collection of items from the Muslim world, or to do with the Muslim world. Probably the most relevant gallery to visit is the "Trade and Empire Gallery". Importantly, the library holds ships' records and crew lists dating back over a very long period. The National Maritime Museum is also a close neighbour to The Royal Observatory and the Cutty Sark, visits to all three of which would make a good day-trip.

The Victoria and Albert Museum

Cromwell Road,
South Kensington SW7 2RL
020-7942-2000
www.vam.ac.uk
(Open everyday 10am-5.45pm, Weds 10am-10pm)

The "V & A" is probably the main rival to the British Museum in terms of laying claim to Britain's biggest and best Islamic collection. Although the museum exhibits more of its collection than the British Museum, in terms of display it perhaps takes second place due to poor lighting and bad labelling (however, plans to re-vamp the galleries are currently under foot). The main Islamic gallery is on the Ground floor, in room 42, but there are a number of other galleries too where Islamic artefacts can be found, such as in the ceramics, textiles, fashion, woodwork, prints, and metalwork departments. Also relevant are the Far East galleries, and the South and South East Asia galleries, which include the Indian collection (the Nehru Gallery). Also of interest are the British galleries where some of the strange contraptions and gifts from the Great Exhibition can be viewed. The Victoria and Albert hosts a number of regular exhibitions, many of which are relevant to its Islamic collection, the most recent example of which is "The Adventures of Hamza" from March-June 2003. The V & A houses the National Art Library, The Print Room, and the Archive of Art and Design.

Ismaili Centre

Cromwell Road
South Kensington

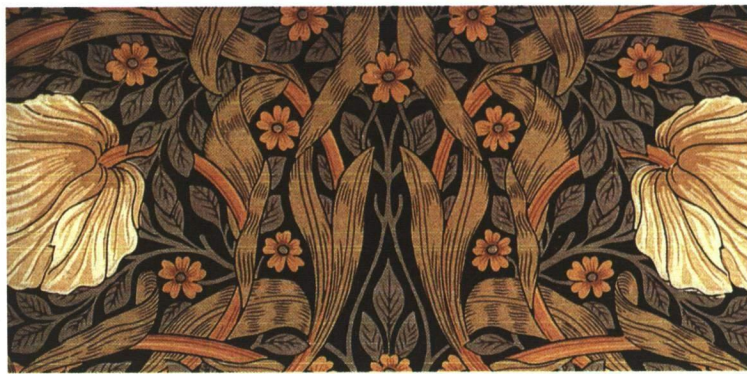
The Centre was established in the 1980s mainly as a prayer hall and meeting place for the Ismaili community. Though information about events is a bit difficult to come by, it does have the odd very interesting

lecture or exhibition relevant to Muslims generally, and it might be worth popping in for a brief look when passing to go to the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The Commonwealth Institute

Commonwealth Institute
Kensington High Street
London W8 6NQ
Tel: + 44 (0) 207 603 4535
www.commonwealth.org.uk

Fairly self-explanatory, this mainly hosts exhibitions and events from the various Commonwealth countries (both old and new). In terms of the Muslim world, this includes much of Africa, South-East Asia, and the Indian Sub-Continent, but these will be found intermingled with Australia past and present to name but one.



However, the centre is particularly good for children to visit. It provides both an historical and contemporary insight into Commonwealth countries, their cultures and whatever issues they might face. It has declined in popularity over the years, however, as it tends to focus on school trips and hosting conferences. However, it is still worth enquiring into any current events or exhibitions.

The Guards' Museum

Wellington Barracks
Birdcage Walk, St James's Park
020-7414-3271
(Open everyday 10am-4pm)

Situated opposite the Guards' Chapel in Wellington Barracks complex, this small museum might interest some with its impressive array of war booty, including Sudanese prayer mats dating back to 1898, and also some items taken from an Iraqi soldier during the previous Gulf War in 1991.

The Horniman Museum, and Gardens

100 London Road,
Forest Hill, Dulwich, SE23 3PQ
020-8699-1872
www.horniman.demon.co.uk
(Open Mon-Sat 10.30am-5.30pm,
Sun 2-5.30pm)

This was built in 1901 by another tea-trader, Frederick Horniman. Much of the collection is dominated by stuffed animals from around the world, but there are also some interesting artefacts from his travels in the

Muslim world, among others. It houses a significant ethnographic collection, and also an interesting collection of musical instruments from India, Uzbekistan, Egypt and Europe. There is a large number of musical instruments specifically from the Arab world, and an interactive Music Gallery.

Imperial War Museum

Lambeth Road, SE1 6HZ
020-7416-5320
www.iwm.org.uk

A variety of artefacts here, including books, documents, photographs as well as military paraphernalia, much of which relates to the Muslim world and the Age of Empire. There are also many things relevant to modern conflicts in the Muslim world, and especially to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Royal College of Surgeons Museum

35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields,
WC2A 3PN
020-7869-6560
www.rcseng.ac.uk
(Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm)

Not everyone's cup of tea, but of interest to those students of Islamic medical history and the history of surgery. The museum has a number of surgical implements from the Muslim world, and its library also houses a number of manuscripts in Latin translation from Islam's medical scholars - including Ar-Razi and Ibn Sina. These can be viewed for research purposes, but by appointment. The Royal Pharmaceutical Society's museum is also of interest, but there is very little to see in terms of actual objects.

Kufa Gallery

Westbourne Hall
26 Westbourne Grove, W2 5RH
020-7229-1928
(Open Tue-Sat 11am-5pm)

This gallery also has mainly contemporary exhibitions, and they are mainly from the Levant. Despite the scruffy exterior, it is actually quite a nice gallery. They also have a varied programme of cultural events posted on the notice board, which includes poetry readings, musical evenings, lectures and community-based events.

VITA (Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts)

19-22 Charlotte Road, EC2A 3SG
020-7613-8500
www.princes-foundation.org

Housed in the Prince's Foundation this building offers a number of possibilities. There is a cafe, and also a regular series of lectures concerning the various institutions that function from there. The VITA exhibition is shown in the foyer twice a year, and it is open to the public. It is very interesting to see how the students are being taught the traditional Islamic crafts, and the amazing work that results. Although some accuse the courses of being superficial, students do learn about almost the full range of Islamic crafts, including ceramics, stucco work, illuminated painting, calligraphy, wood-carving and architectural drawing.

Brunei Gallery

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
10 Thornhaugh Street,
Russell Square, WC1H 0XG
020-7898-4915
www.soas.ac.uk/gallery
(Open Mon-Fri 10.30am-5pm)

This gallery, set up with money granted by the Sultan of Brunei, hosts a number of mainly contemporary exhibitions by artists and photographers from Asia and Africa. One past example was the stunning collection of photographs taken by British Muslim Peter Sanders on his travels around the Muslim world. The building also houses the SOAS bookshop, where a number of books relating to Islam can be bought, though not always complimentary.

The gallery, along with SOAS itself, is also the host for a number of events and lectures.

Mathaf Gallery

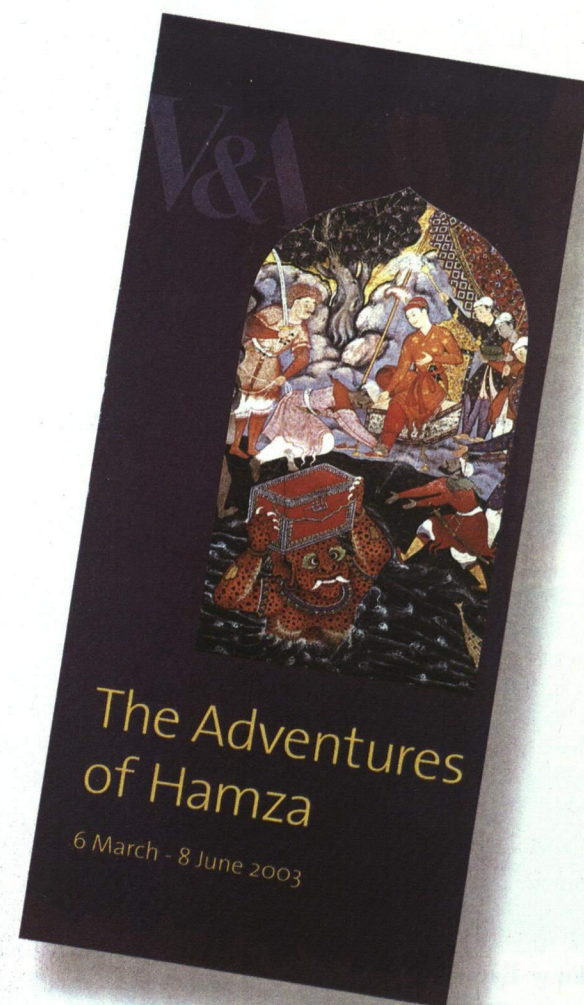
24 Moscomb Street, SW1X 8JU
020-7235-0010
www.mathafgallery.com
(Open Mon-Fri 9.30am-5.30pm)

This gallery is dedicated to exhibiting the works of painters who define themselves as Orientalists. The range of paintings includes the classics, as well as some far more modern examples. It is perhaps an easier way to view this genre of painting rather than trying to make your way through one of the museums.

Whitechapel Art Gallery

Whitechapel High Street, E1
020-7522-7888
www.whitechapel.org

Mainly hosts exhibitions by contemporary and local artists, but it is worth watching out to see any contemporary Muslim artists, and especially interesting is how they interpret growing up as Muslims in London. Otherwise a very modern gallery with good facilities, and which attracts a large number of visitors to Whitechapel.





Eating Out in Muslim London

Due to London's vibrant cultural mix, there can be found a wide range of restaurants, cafes and eateries to be enjoyed. These vary in quality, style and price-range. Depending upon the area, those wanting a particular cuisine can more or less pick any street and find grocery shops, restaurants, canteens or cafes as desired.

Sub-continental

Those areas to concentrate on as far as "affordable" and "authentic" go, would be **Southall, Wembley, Tooting, Brick Lane** and **Green Street** generally. The eccentric restaurants of **Banglatown** (*Brick Lane*) are quickly becoming very popular with the various businessmen in the area, and they are probably more easily accessible for some. One of Brick Lane's best is the **Lahore Kebab House** of 2 *Umberstone Street*, where the food is tasty but cheap. The quirky service can also be entertaining.



Khans Restaurant, London W2

A more central, and also quite a reasonable, option is the famous **Khan's Restaurant** of 13-15 *Westbourne Grove, London W2* (0207 727-5420). The slogan goes, "if you haven't been to Khan's, you haven't been to London". What is notable about Khan's is its stand at becoming one of Central London's first non-alcoholic restaurants, a stance that other restaurants would do well to follow. It is also a good idea to walk past at iftar time during Ramadan, as the Muslim will be welcomed by a basic but complimentary meal.

Japanese and Chinese

Westbourne Grove is an interesting road to visit in a number of capacities. Although the **Queensway-Bayswater** area has a reputation for attracting a number of Arabs, a wide variety of visitors can now be found there and its restau-

rants reflect this mix. There is the **New Garden Chinese Restaurant** at 52 *Westbourne Grove*, which although is not run by Muslims and also serves pork does serve halal Chinese meals too for its Muslim customers. If keen on trying Far-Eastern food, virtually any Japanese restaurant will be relatively Muslim-friendly in that it serves mostly fish. One quaint but poky example, **Inoho**, can be found just off *Westbourne Grove in Hereford Road*. Another is **Donburi, The Japanese Canteen**, which can be found off *Baker Street in Thayer Street*. **The Tandoori Kebab**

Centre of 161-163 *The Broadway, Southall* (0208 571-5738) also boasts to be the "UK's first 100 percent Halal Chinese". Alternatively, those Muslims who will eat kosher food, might also enjoy a visit to **Kaifeng Kosher Oriental (Chinese)** at 51

Church Road, Hendon.

Westbourne Grove a culinary mix

Across the road at 63 can be found a halal **Nando's Chickenland Ltd**, which is usually full of British-Asian and Arab visitors testing out the Portuguese cuisine. **Alounak**, a Persian halal restaurant at 44 is also usually fairly busy; it serves good food at quite reasonable prices but again serves alcohol. **Baghdad**, a bit further on at 107 serves some good Levantine food, but the Muslim eater should again bear in mind - if it is a problem for them - that some people in the restaurant will be drinking alcohol. Lastly, a well-established and popular Sudanese restaurant, shop and cafe called **Mandola** can be found at 139-141 *Westbourne Grove* (0207 229-4734). It provides a cosy and comfortable setting to try

out a much under-appreciated cuisine and is also available for group-bookings.

Lebanese The "Oush" District

Another restaurant and cafe mini-metropolis is the much-publicised **Edgware Road**, here known as the "**Oush District**". All pretty much comparable in price and quality, there are a number of Lebanese restaurants and cafes, serving mint tea, food, and "**shisha**" pipes, mainly to tourists and its annual visitors from the Gulf. There can also be found juice-bars, ice-cream parlours, video shops selling films and computer games in Arabic, and even a number of tasteful furniture shops. All of the **Maroush-owned eateries**, which include **Ranoush Juice** and the **Maroush Seafood Restaurant**, are halal as certified by the Liverpool Islamic Cultural Centre, whose certificates they are keen to display. Likewise with **Cafe Fatoush** at 183. Another "-oush" worth a visit is **Tarboush** at 143 *Edgware Road* (alcohol served though food halal). **Maroush** itself at 21 *Edgware Road*, also provides live musical entertainment in the evenings, as do a number of the restaurants up and down this lively street.

Malay

Further up *Edgware Road* at 175A can be found another institution of Muslim London, **Mawar Restaurant**, which serves very affordable halal Malay food. This has served the Malaysian community of London, and interested others, for many years and has thus gained a reputation for good and reliable food. If lucky, the eater can be serenaded by television direct from Kuala Lumpur or the latest Malaysian pop-songs. Something of a speciality worth trying is their "**Teh Tarek**", sweet, frothy Malay tea which will round off a spicy meal very nicely. A Malay cafe and take-away can be found - conveniently - near to

Portobello Road Market, Portobello Books (a good source for second-hand books and also Muslim-owned), and to the **Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre and Mosque** of *Acklam Road*. **Makan** of 270 *Portobello Road* serves some good and very affordable food, meanwhile doing some sterling da'wah work among the Bohemian clientele. The ladies behind the counter more often than not will be wearing hijab, and it makes a refreshing post-jumu'ah lunch trip.

Moroccan

If in the *Portobello Road* area and looking for a restaurant instead, the **Moroccan Tagine Restaurant** of 95 *Golborne Road* is just a short walk away, near to the older Moroccan mosque. Another Moroccan restaurant can be found just off *Queensway* and opposite to *Whiteley's Shopping Mall*. **The Cous Cous Cafe** of 7 *Porchester Gardens* has very attractive decor and serves good, though slightly more expensive food, but alcohol is also served.

Syrian

One of London's up-and-coming cuisines is that of **Abu Zaad** of 29 *Uxbridge Road* (0208 749-5107). Abu Zaad serves authentic Damascene cuisine and sweetmeats at reasonable prices. It is ideally located just opposite *Shepherds Bush Hammersmith and City Line station*, and provides a very warm, clean and efficient service. While eating, you can also enjoy the elaborate decor, including small models of Damascus street scenes, its famous water wheel, and various Quranic verses. If Diane Haddad and Fayrouz are too much to bear, they will change the music on request.

Turkish

Hackney is a hotspot for Turkish food of varying qualities. *Green Lane* has a number of kebaberies and grocery shops, which cater for the Turkish customer. A bit further down from there towards the market and *Dalston-Kingsland station* you can

find a number of Turkish cafes and restaurants selling some excellent, affordable food in sizeable portions. One of the best restaurants to go to in this area is actually the canteen of the **Aziziye Mosque** in 117-119 *Stoke Newington Road* (0207 254-0046), near to Manor House tube station. And further down the road, towards *Old Street and the City*, is another good the canteen at the **Suleymaniye Mosque**. Another more upmarket Turkish cuisine option is the chain of **Sofra restaurants**, found in *St. Christopher's Place, Covent Garden and Regent's Street*. They serve alcohol and cater mainly for a trendy, non-Muslim clientele, but they do offer some very interesting old recipes, such as the "Albanian liver from the Ottoman Period". And they have a good selection of meze, seafood and vegetarian dishes.

Coffee

If inspired by the London coffee-houses of the past, the **Algerian Coffee Stores** of 52 *Old Compton Street* (www.algcoffee.co.uk) might also be worth a visit. Although this place is only for the purchasing of coffee, you can appreciate the aromas from around the world in a setting akin to a traditional nineteenth century sweet-shop. Apart from such delights as the "Five Spices Coffee", the "Yemeni Matari" or the "Elephant Beans", it also sells a variety of teas like the "White Snow Dragon", chocolates and the bizarre and beautiful range of coffee-making contraptions and accompaniments. You can even order on-line at www.estore.ignite.com/home/algcoffee. If keen to re-live the coffee-house experience, another good place is the **Monmouth Coffee Company** of 27 *Monmouth Street near Covent Garden*, where the coffee-drinker can sit and relax with their own personal concoction.

A Muslim coffee-house in the true sense of the word is the new social club, **ArRum**, on *Clerkenwell Road*. Visitors can eat at the restaurant or simply enjoy a juice at the bar. They can sit and read from the library's selection of books, and they will find the walls around them decorated with the latest art exhibition. Lectures and activities are also a common occurrence; as well as business meetings and networking between members and regulars.

The best restaurants and cafes are often those that are not found in the guide-books, or in the Yellow Pages. They serve local people at local rates and according to local demand, which is what is refreshing and most unique about them all. Finding the best places to eat in Muslim London generally requires time and effort to try, and test, them, and as stated above this often involves picking on a street in one of the Muslim hang-outs and finding somewhere that looks congenial. There is no more appealing way of integrating and breaking down barriers than by sharing the enjoyment of good food and good company, and few things could be more Islamic.

THE MUSLIM COUNCIL OF BRITAIN

MCB

five years of service to the community
and growing with the grace of God

The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB), the representative body founded in 1997, has worked for the benefit of the Muslim community at all levels of society and has, by the grace of Allah, raised the profile of Muslims in Britain - so far with very meagre resources.

So much more remains to be done. We need to invest in our young people, strengthen our family and community institutions so that people can feel relaxed and comfortable in our midst, work for greater co-operation and solidarity within the Muslim community and continue to defend it wisely and effectively.

We need to participate in the social and political life of Britain and Europe and contribute something of value to the society in which we live. This has always been the genuine Muslim way: ours have never been ghetto communities, or isolated groups agitating from the sidelines.

Such tasks need resources, enormous resources, if they are to be tackled properly.

As a community we need to raise the level of our commitment and performance dramatically if we are to survive and live in dignity in these perilous times.

MCB Committees

Central Working Committee; Business and Economics; Finance and General Purpose; Membership; Legal Affairs; Research and Documentation; Media; Education, Training & Employment; Mosque and Community Affairs; Social Affairs; Health and Medical Issues; Women and Family Affairs; Youth and Sports; Public Affairs; Regeneration and Renewal; London Affairs Committee; Europe and International Affairs.

WE NEED INDIVIDUAL MUSLIMS AND INSTITUTIONS THROUGHOUT BRITAIN TO:

Participate - use your skills, network with others, offer your advice and services to any of the MCB committees who are open to ideas and initiatives.

Contribute - human resources, material resources, financial resources. The MCB really needs your financial help to do its work effectively. Fill out a banker's standing order form from £5 a month or whatever you can afford. Give a donation. Support a project.

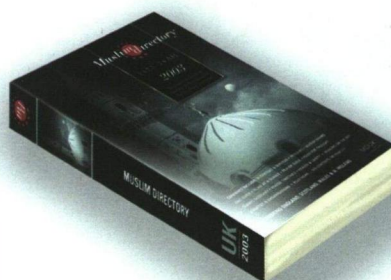
Affiliate - if your mosque, local association, women's or youth group, professional body or any Muslim organisation is not yet affiliated to the MCB, send for an Affiliation Pack. It's easy to affiliate.

For a list of MCB affiliates, contacts, committees, updates and work in progress, visit the MCB web site. Write, phone, send an email or arrange a meeting.

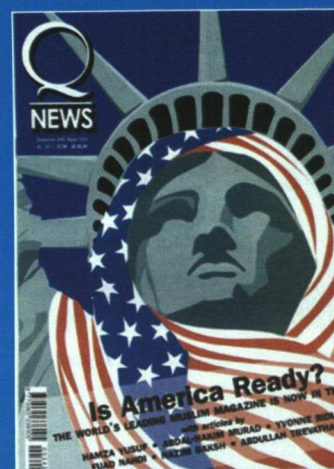
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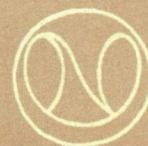
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Education

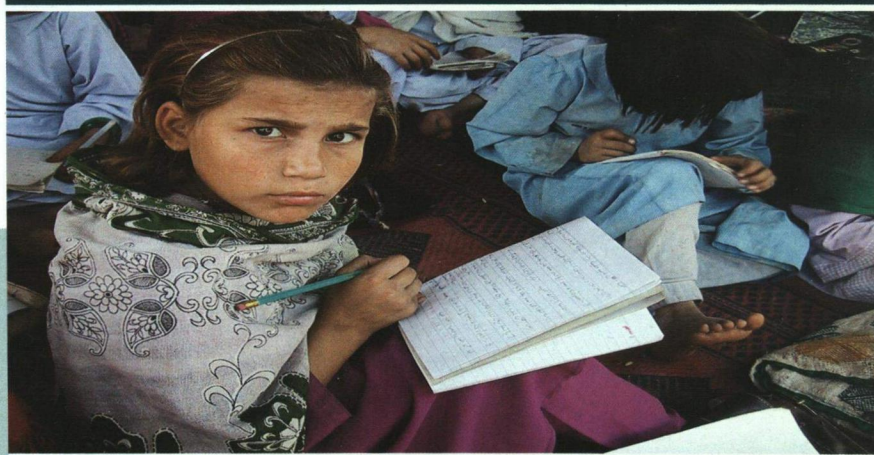
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What is the London Muslim Coalition?

The London Muslim Coalition can be considered as one big tent open to all members of the communities in London. Spacious, warm and transparent it is a place to meet and socialise, conform and rebel, plan and execute. The aim is always to strive for change and betterment in the fortunes of the communities and society we live in.

It is not, and never intended to be, an assembly of the converted. If anything it is a gathering of those determined to make a difference in their lives and those of their neighbours. Nearly two years in the making, the foundations of the LMC can be described as a celebration of diversity, consensual decisions and the eagerness to get on with the job of serving the interests of the community.

Members are, indeed, united in good faith. If there is any guiding principle it is the Prophetic traditions: 'The one who is not interested in the affairs of Muslims is not one of them' and, 'The believers are, in their mutual affection and sympathy, as one body; when one of its organs falls ill the rest of the body is mutually affected with fever and sleeplessness.'

But the LMC is not a motley collection of inward-looking believers: that would be against both the Islamic ethos and the nature of London, the great city of which its members are inhabitants. For according to the Prophet: 'Let him who believes in God and the Last Day honour his neighbour' and, 'Gabriel has enjoined me so often with regard to the neighbour that I thought he would allow him to inherit.'

Members of the LMC are conscious that to be different they need to be relevant. To serve their community effectively they understand that team-work, clarity of objectives and dogged dedication are essential. Nobody can accuse the LMC of impatience: its gestation period - from inception to launch - was nearly two years.

So on April 1, 2003, we will celebrate the launch of a new collective which has been in existence for more than 20 months. We assure you that it has gone through its baptism of fire many times over.

Part of the LMC strength lies in the fact that it constitutes mostly of doers - people with a track history of working for their communities and for London as a whole. Its membership is an exotic blend of cultures and backgrounds. This makes the LMC excitingly unpredictable and pertinent.

The LMC has deep grassroots connections and a fair inkling on how the system works. The intention is to

strategize, to mobilise and, more importantly, to act. We began with the understanding that our communities have so far had a bad deal. Worse than anybody: the facts speak for themselves.

According to all existing statistics we are the 'new underclass': poverty-stricken, disenfranchised, marginalised, discriminated at work, school and at home. We are victims of a vicious culture that does not only want to take us seriously but actually embrace policies and strategies that hurt and harm us.

But all this has to end because oppression, exploitation and discrimination are never permanent, history tells us. However, we are not bitter and are convinced that things will change - for the better.

Our agenda for change is based on the realisation that real change can only take place if that change is first manifested in our intentions and actions. It will only come if we believe that we are part of the solution: that what changes we want to bring to our communities is good not only for us but for society as a whole.

We are passionate about justice, fairness and tolerance. And we are serious about respect. However, for a long time now we have not been beneficiaries of much of the good efforts going on around us. Whether in the midst of the din of the Notting Hill Carnival, or the sleek recruiting advertisement of the Met - we have been bypassed and totally sidelined.

The fact, however, is that nobody can afford to continue ignoring the voices of Muslim Londoners. We have arrived in more ways than just through official statistics. The reality that nearly one out of every ten Londoners is a Muslim is breathtaking; however, the recognition that the majority live in a perpetual state of persecution, discrimination and destitution should be frightening.

Our misfortune as a community is compounded by the curse of Islamophobia. The irrational hatred and fear of Islam seems ever on the increase due to ignorance and the lack of will to combat it. While much noise has been made - correctly so - over the evil of 'institutional racism' our society would continue to be far from perfect if we are not pre-

pared to identify and condemn 'institutional Islamophobia'.

What Islamophobia does is not only callously discriminate and persecute but dehumanises and damages those it touches. The combination of a negative media together with an environment that allows and sometimes even encourages Islamophobes provokes and encourages the polarisation of society.

The LMC is dedicated to the eradication of Islamophobia in our society at all levels. Wherever this 'ugly reality' (as the Runnymede Trust Report of 1997 described the phenomenon) we are committed to combating it with all the resources available to us. Its cancerous growth must not be allowed to spread and under no circumstances should it be allowed to poison our communities.

Today no initiative, no strategy, no programme aimed at London's well-being can claim to be based on equal opportunity and fairness if it does not have a Muslim element.

Whether it is the issue of truancy in schools, stop and search by the police, the criminalisation of the young and the discrimination of the work force: we bear the burden.

Most efforts aimed at social cohesion and equal opportunities have bypassed us because they tend to be 'faith-blind'. Strategies and initiatives, however well-intentioned they are, have contributed towards our impoverishment and alienation because race categorisation tends to bypass Muslims - ironically, the most multi-ethnic and multi-cultural of communities.

The LMC will, at all times, champion the necessary changes that have to take place among our policy makers and service deliverers in understanding the reality modern Britain lives in.

What we demand is fairness in resource allocation, equality of opportunities and respect towards our chosen identity.

But the LMC hopes to be more than just a pro-active campaigner and advocate of Muslim rights and needs. None of its members belongs to the doom and gloom brigade: we believe in the powers of renewal and regeneration within our communities and hope to harness them at every opportunity.

We are convinced that we make good friends, neighbours and colleagues. We believe that our ability to share and care, to laugh and cry have always contributed towards a more humane society historically and at the present time. So we will struggle against being ghettoised, demonised and made simple. We are communities with a history, culture and character that have made tremendous contributions towards the development of humanity.

And our intention is to create platforms where we can share our rich heritage and experience with the whole of society. We want to remind

those around us that we built the Al-Hambra and the Taj Mahal, we invented Algebra and clocks, and introduced oranges, paisley and chivalry to these parts of the world.

We want to work for a future in which our children and those of our neighbours stand side by side appreciating and respecting both their heritages and their contributions our one society.

We want a future in which we are perceived not as trouble-makers or 'a problem' but one in which we are considered warriors of change and an intricate part of the solution.

CAPITAL from page one

their identity - not the colour of their skin or politics.

The effect has been to make the Muslim communities invisible and ensure that they did not benefit from any initiatives aimed at addressing discrimination. As a result Muslims have benefited the least from any efforts to regenerate communities and have therefore emerged as society's new underclass.

As if discriminatory policies adopted by the secular race industry and the racism from mainstream society was not enough Muslims have also had to deal with the evil of Islamophobia.

This particularly evil form of discrimination, first officially acknowledged by a Runnymede Report in 1997, has caused havoc and devastation to the Muslim community. The self-esteem and confidence of members of the communities, particularly the youth, is under constant attack through negative coverage in the media, jibes in school, attacks in the streets and discrimination at the workplace.

The situation is made even worse by the insensitive and often discriminatory services provided by local and central authorities. Contrary to popular opinion among service providers and race activists the Muslim community is not a 'problem': actually the community deserves to be praised for its tenacity in surviving and even

prospering despite all the odds.

Today London can boast of nearly 300 mosques and over 500 *madrasahs* that have been entirely set up and are run by the community with no help or assistance from any outside agencies.

There are now signs that there is a recognition of the failure of race-based service provision. But the revolution to cater for such a complex and deprived community need to be bold, imaginative and relevant. Any half-baked tokenistic effort is likely to lead to negative effects and plunge community relations into even more chaos.

The most important thing for service providers and policy makers is to liberate them from outdated notions of understanding society in terms of racial categorisation. A willingness to treat Muslims as a discrete heterogeneous group is essential for any initiative to be equitable and achieve the desired results.

Muslim demands for essential resources to revitalise their communities need to be taken seriously in any genuine initiative aimed at community cohesion.

Otherwise we will reap suffer the consequences from a community that is dangerously fragile, unnecessarily marginalised and helplessly under-resourced.