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Once Were Mahometans:
Muslims in the South Island of New Zealand, mid-19th to late 20th century,
with special reference to Canterbury

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Philosophy in Religious Studies
at
The University of Waikato
by
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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2016

Abstract

This thesis analyses and critically discusses the historical development of the Muslim community in the South Island of New Zealand from the 1850s up to the late 20th century. Islam in the South Island – referred to colloquially as the ‘Mainland’ – is a story of the gradual development of an immigrant community, particularly focused around the Muslim residents of the province of Canterbury and, to a lesser extent, Otago. It involves the stories of many contributing individuals and families, focusing on their individual activities as well as their cumulative interactions. At the terminus of this study, Canterbury Muslims were operating an independent religious Association. The scholarly challenge of this thesis is to make coherent sense out of these stories and the historical developments they reflect, determining where (if any) continuity exists.

Research for this thesis has relied upon a combination of archival material pertaining to individuals and groups, critical analysis of various media (especially newspapers as well as Muslim community publications, such as newsletters), together with a close study of the limited scholarly output related to this area of investigation. The intention is to explore the South Island Muslim minority in history and to elucidate the reasons why the community developed in the way it has. There is a considerable amount of specific documentation on the activities and interactions of various individuals. The impact and influence of significant early forerunners and pioneering individuals, as well as later settlers and migrants will be examined together with the role played by international students. Themes such as leadership, diversity and co-existence with other settler groups, primarily the Anglo-European and then Pakeha majority, underpin the narrative. The intention is to present a balanced but fundamentally selective survey of the history of South Island Muslims based on hard evidence and clear narratives, and to make visible a religious group that has been neglected in mainstream histories to date; indeed, a social group which in more recent times has been frequently misunderstood and even vilified.

Questions raised in the thesis include: How and when exactly did Muslims arrive? What were the determining factors and hermeneutical paradigms of Muslim settlement? What form(s) of Islam was articulated and practised? Does the Muslim community (the *ummah*) represent here one form of Islam or were there many? And if many, how did they co-exist? What were the tensions and accommodations that applied? The underlying aim of this thesis is to offer a much more nuanced comprehension of the complexities of the Muslim experience in New Zealand than has hitherto been attempted.

Acknowledgments:

I would like to acknowledge my thesis supervisors, Professor Douglas Pratt (Religious Studies) and Dr Rosalind McClean (History), scholars from important disciplines who helped frame the complex nature of this research. Both have helped broaden my theoretical boundaries in order to grasp insights that I had not appreciated or fully understood. Their supervision was challenging and rewarding, their persistence and tolerance inspirational. The comments and suggestions I received provided excellent feedback guidance throughout the entire process. Thank you to you both.

Other folk, both academic and non-academic, have made significant contributions that helped in a variety of ways. These include, but are not limited to: Dr William Shepard, Dr Erich Kolig, Dr Jacqueline Leckie, Dr Mustafa Farouk, Dr M. Alayan, Dr Todd Nachowitz, Sheikh Mohamed Amir, Richard Greenaway, Simon Grey, Mortaza Shams, Hazim Arafeh, Anafa Yusuf Keskin, Lyla al-Alawi, Sadiq Nicholson, Anthony Jamal Green, Mazhar Krasniqi, Ibrahim Abdulhalim, Suliman Kara, the late Hajji Abd Ala Ditta, Taoufik Elidrissi, Roy French, Steve Ali Johnston, Fawzan Hafiz, Miralem Musovich, Ian Blissett, David Spurdle, and an army of unnamed librarians and archivists from a myriad of institutions across the country who have helped me to pin down obscure documents in my research. Each helped contribute to this project, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly.

I would also like to thank the following organisations, associations and institutions that helped in both tangible and intangible ways: the Muslim Association of Canterbury, the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand, and the Waikato Muslim Association. I would especially like to thank all of the secretaries and presidents of these organisations. Thanks are also due to numerous unnamed informants among the wider Muslim community who took the time to answer my various questions and communications over the past few years.

Last but not least, I'd like to express my deepest and most heartfelt gratitude to members of my immediate and extended family for tolerating me when I was most grumpy and for supporting me unconditionally when I most needed it. This journey would not have been possible without them. In particular, I'd like to thank my parents for kick-starting my lifelong interest in history and religion when I was young, for encouraging and inspiring me in my pursuit of knowledge. Most importantly my deepest and profoundest gratitude, appreciation and love to my amazing wife, Hazra Bi, who supported me emotionally and our children Amina, Ismail and Yusuf, for their steadfast and ongoing encouragement and kind words.

Dedication:

I dedicate this to my beloved mother, Rosalind Ruth Bishop, without whom it would have been impossible for me to complete my university studies and thesis work.

Illustrations

‘Ice Cream Charlie’ 1939

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The spread of Islam in the South Island is largely a story of the gradual development of a growing immigrant Muslim community, particularly focused around the Muslim residents of Canterbury and Otago. In this thesis I will map out this evolution from the earliest point to the 1970s when the Muslim Association of Canterbury was established and the first purpose built mosque was erected over 1983-1984.

The history of Muslims of the South Island (known colloquially and popularly as ‘the Mainland’) is essentially the story of many contributing individuals and, usually, their families. Perhaps uniquely in Pacific-Islamic history (compared to China for example) we have a considerable amount of specific documentation on the cumulative interactions of these early Muslim forerunners and pioneers who brought Islam to this country – dates and names abound. The challenge here is in making some sort of coherent sense out of it all and determining where (if any) continuity exists and how. Most New Zealand Muslims take scant interest in history and so determining a clear historiographical *tendenz* can be both challenging and rewarding. Early Muslim migrants and visitors to New Zealand – especially the hawkers, sailors and labourers – were basically sojourners who for the most part had no intention of settling down. Most lived the hard, difficult lives of colonial pioneers and evidentially planned to ‘go home’ once they had ‘made their fortune’. Of the few who decided to settle in the first several decades and certainly of those who ultimately did move on, even fewer have left any physical mark upon the countryside besides a few exotic and curious gravestones (no mosques or Islamic buildings were constructed, books printed or localised verbal legends established).¹ The markers of their presence and activities as do exist – brief newspaper articles and court records – are not the usual resource material favoured by type used by genealogists or prosopographers. None appear to have left personal accounts, documents, letters or diaries that would so help the historians and students of religion, although it seems safe to assume that their Islam was not entirely dormant. We can only guess at the religious reassurance they made of their quiescent spiritual life, or eke out an interpretation based on scant scraps of information.

¹There are three known ‘Muslim’ names on the topography of the South Island but all are coincidental. The Baghdad Creek in Otago was named after a British ship transporting British colonists. The Mirza Creek and Mirza Downs in Marlborough were named after a racehorse owned by a local farmer. Finally, Ayesha Stream on the West Coast was named after a character in a Rider Haggard novel. See: ‘Found in New Zealand. The Ayesha Stream’, *Al Mujaddid*, Volume 1 (21 June 2003), p.16.

Overview and Objectives

Alfred Korzybski made an important observation about knowledge and information decades ago when he famously said: ‘the map is not the territory and the name is not the thing named.’² I have found the title of this thesis to be a useful working appellation but I do not pretend to exclude other historical examinations or interpretations. It is worth noting from the outset that the history of the New Zealand Muslim community lacks any real dominant meta-narrative. There is no communal anatomy, phenotype or physiology, there are no real myths or legends, no memorable heroes and, thankfully, only a few real villains. New Zealand Muslims are not consanguineous and there is no predominating ethnic or national group, no dominant language group. There are Sunni and Shia Muslim voices, and even those of other sectarian groups. Muslims in New Zealand do not congregate around particular villages or cities, suburbs or neighbourhoods in any remarkable numbers, or any particular jobs or careers. There has been no Muslim ‘colony’ or specific settlement comparable to the French at Akaroa, the Danes at Dannevirke or the Germans at Puhoi. Strikingly, even the wide spread employment of Muslim men as halal slaughtermen since the 1980s has not led to a corresponding expansion of Muslim workers into other areas inside the vast freezing works industry. To borrow the words of the anthropologist Gregory Bateson there is no ‘...consistent homogenous pattern of behaviour in all members of the group.’³ This is compounded by the fact that the Muslim community, both in the present and in the past, interpret and practice Islam in a variety of forms and overall the community positively constantly hums with low frequency grievances – distinguishing fact from fantasy becomes one of the historians prime tasks as empirical measurements of past communal or personal dissatisfactions are notoriously tricky and risky. The growth and consolidation of the scholarly field of Islam studies in recent years, however, should provide academics with ample confidence to engage these complicated and diverse histories and biographies – of migration, settlement, integration and assimilation – without undue fear of furthering sectarian narratives or disrupting popular communal mythologies.

The absence of formal religious leadership within our societal focus group, South Island Muslims, is one of the more noteworthy communal features with long term consequences. Of course the inner spiritual value of a person is seldom conditioned by geographic or territorial location alone and by the 1970s, to be sure, some excellent part-time lay appointees have served the pious needs and aspirations of South Island Muslims. I am interested in causative factors rather than Islamic religious practices *per se* and generally

² Alfred Korzybski, *Science and Sanity: An Introduction to Non-Aristotelian Systems and General Semantics*, ed. Robert Pula, 5th edition (New York: Institute of General Semantics, 1994), pp.747–61.

³ Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 65.

speaking, unless absolutely necessary to explain historical events, this thesis will not directly explore Islam the religion, or the Quran as *textus receptus*. In the pages that follow I offer an impression of the New Zealand Muslim community that is both personal and interpretive. I write for those who know the basics of Islam and will not labour the obvious points of doctrine with needless sesquipedalian loquaciousness or argue the significance of the Sana'a palimpsest.

For outsiders looking inwards, Islam can be summarised simply as a staunchly monotheistic religion based on the preaching of the seventh century Arabian prophet Muhammad ibn Abdullah of Mecca. The Arabic word 'Islam' means peace with or surrender to God, and Muslims are those who seek peace or submission to God. After the prophet Muhammad's death in 632 CE the revelations, messages and instructions he claimed to have received from God were collated, hastily, into a book form known commonly as the Quran (recitation), which has effectively become the sacred scripture of Islam. Later scholars of the faith codified the five main principles (often called 'pillars') as: Creed, Prayer, Fasting, Charity and Pilgrimage. The creed or *Shahadah* literally states 'There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the prophet of Allah'. Prayer or *Salat* (or sometimes *Namaz*) is supposed to be conducted at five specific times of the day (morning, midday, afternoon, sunset and evening) although one can offer extra prayers naturally. During the month of Ramadan on the Islamic calendar all Muslims are expected to fast during the hours of daylight. Charity is a calculated 2.5% of income and pilgrimage of Hajj consists of travelling to the city of Mecca and performing particular traditional rites. Ideally Islam is a communal faith and Islamic morals and principles are supposed to inculcate reciprocal goodwill and respect. Individually Muslims are supposed to undertake these particular ritual practices regularly and consequently Islam is widely understood as an orthopraxy rather than an orthodoxy. There is an ongoing stress on conformity to ritual practice rather than a strict adherence to an overly specific set of uniform beliefs.

As a Pakeha convert to Islam I write from the perspective of both an insider and an outsider. From 1999 to 2002 I worked at the office of the Islamic Federation in Wellington, and in Dunedin (2002-2003) as South Island Halal Meat Supervisor. Over 2003-2004 I was invited to serve on the Executive Committee of the Muslim Association of Canterbury. All of these opportunities allowed me to develop good personal relationships with Muslim community leaders and elders (in office and retired) that has given me some insight into both the inner workings of mosque politics and the community's complex history. This thesis draws upon this experience and a variety of sources including from time to time private conversations, correspondence, plus diary and private meeting notes. In terms of methodology this approach

employs aspects of oral history and religious studies. There will be some points and contextual data presented here that are widely known within the Muslim community but less so outside of it.

Aristotle once said: 'All men are political beasts.' He meant of course that all men belong to a *Polis* - a city or community. I believe this to be very true thousands of years later and for this reason I have chosen to focus on what happened to Muslims, and within the Muslim community, rather than elaborate the precise and finer theological beliefs held or expressed. This thesis falls within the interdisciplinary field of the study of religion with particular reference to my own field of interest and expertise in history. I am interested here in the complex dynamics of community development. The British historian Arnold J. Toynbee articulated a view that states were composed entirely of 'societies which...are independent entities that can constitute an intelligible field of study'⁴ (Toynbee was paraphrasing Polybius here.) Indeed, one might seriously ask whether – despite 200 years of European contact, colonisation, and economic and technological development – New Zealand has changed that much from a nation of tribes or communities and sub-communities and sub-cultures sharing the same geographic spread of land like a hastily and rather messily drawn Venn diagram. Of course many of the foci develop and emerge from Islam and need clarification from time to time, and I have endeavoured to incorporate and briefly elucidate some of the more interesting intellectual currents and significant spiritual-philosophical ideas that have emerged inside the New Zealand Muslim minority. Taken as a whole this thesis is not an introduction to Islam. Rather it is an introduction into the complicated history of South Island Muslims and evolution of Islam in this part of the world over an approximately one hundred year period from the 1850s to the late 20th century.

Initially this project aimed only to examine the first century of Muslim immigration and settlement, from the Chinese gold-miners of Otago in 1874 to the formal establishment of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in 1977.⁵ However I discovered Wuzerah and his family, and a myriad of biographical details that simply had to be incorporated. Secondly, I decided that the full significance of the creation of the Muslim Association could only really be understood within the context of some kind of overview of the first decade of such an agency – an extraordinarily busy period when it acquired both an Islamic Centre and a purpose built mosque (the first of either in the South Island) and pursued some type of proselytising activities. These developments are significant and worthy of study because they

⁴ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Volume 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 45.

⁵ 'Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken for the Night of the 1st of March, 1874' (Wellington, 1875), pp. 56-57; Mansoor Khawaja, 'Masjid Al-Noor, Christchurch', *Al Muslim* Volume 2, Number 4, December 1984, p. 13.

are distinct from corresponding developments within the Muslim community/communities in the North Island.⁶ For these reasons the boundaries of the final project here have expanded to stretch back towards the 1850s and lurch forward, perhaps messily, into the 1980s (and slightly into the 1990s and even early 2000s when warranted).

The overall aim of this thesis is to chart the slow growth of the South Island Muslim community over the initial century of earliest activity and presence in this country. This will be achieved by examining the history of the group rather than the phenomena of Islam *per se*, and the specific oscillations of spatial and social orientation. Such a survey will provide a helpful insight into the ongoing spread and evolution of Muslim minorities within the South Pacific - and indeed in Western societies in general. My study places South Island Muslims within the context of both New Zealand and Muslim minority communal identity and history. Identity may be one of the central themes here. If geographic borders are porous, how exactly do we define 'New Zealand Muslim'? I have been inspired by my favourite historian, the late and much neglected E. H. Carr (1892 - 1982), especially his brilliant if dated writing on historiography. Carr espoused a mostly deterministic view and ultimately concluded that history is a 'continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past.'⁷ Furthermore the notion of Arnold J. Toynbee (1889 - 1975) that 'societies, not states, are 'the social atoms' with which students of history have to deal' rings true with my own research.⁸ I have also been influenced and intrigued by his ideas regarding history as 'a vision of God's creation on the move' and his criticisms of determinism in 'the continuity of history'.⁹ Is there any such thing as continuity when examining disparate minorities, individuals or families geographically isolated from their original communities and homelands? This thesis argues in the affirmative. At the other end of the spectrum here I also give credit to Pieter Geyl (1887 - 1966). I am particularly struck by his notion that history is an 'argument without end' since all historians are influenced by recent and contemporary events when committing their interpretations of the past into print. When it comes to Islamic or Muslim scholarship one must admit the relative paucity of sources compared to Western traditions of historiography, with the important exception of Muhammad ibn Khaldun (1332 - 1406) and his insightful book *Muqaddimah* (popularised in Europe for many centuries with the Greek

⁶ For instance the Auckland-based New Zealand Muslim Association, established in 1950, took nearly ten years to acquire its first Islamic Centre and thirty years to build their first purpose-built mosque.

⁷ E. H. Carr, *What is History* (Second Edition), (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 30.

⁸ Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Volume 1, p. 45.

⁹ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Volume 10 (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 3, 4.

title *Prolegomena*).¹⁰ Ibn Khaldun argued that successful social entities are formed and then held together by *`asabiyah* or group solidarity, and that this socio-political interdependence and solidarity could be variously tribal, familial, racial-biological, linguistic or even regional-territorial ('national' in a pre-modern sense). Or religious and theological. He gave the example of loosely knit networks of Bedouin Arab tribes sweeping out of the deserts periodically to conquer cities and established agricultural regions on some pretext or another and then establishing themselves as a new governing body or polity. One of the points I touch upon, albeit tentatively, is the role of *'asabiyyah* in uniting South Island Muslims of diverse races and nationalities to create the Muslim Association of Canterbury.

In this thesis I explore the historical development of the South Island Muslim minority and aim to elucidate the reasons why the community has developed in the way it has. To achieve this it is necessary to extrapolate the main features, themes and characteristics of the community. Key questions that one must address are who exactly the early Muslim settlers, forerunners or pioneers were. Did the Muslim community grow from these individuals and families, or from later settlers and migrants? What was the role played by international students? The following pages form an exploratory investigation rather than an exhaustive one. My purpose is primarily to outline the most plausible interpretation of the history of the Mainland Muslim community and secondly to intimate any possible areas for future study.

In terms of approach and methodology I undertake a basically historical approach to my subject matter. My thesis relies mainly on printed resources and documents that can be cited (and if needs be presented where applicable). The history of New Zealand Muslims is usually presented in a linear manner (from beginning to end, from the earliest name and dates to the more recent), rather than cyclical (i.e. exploring broader, repeated patterns and themes). Learning from E. H. Carr and his successors I do not introduce my monographic study as a definitive history '*wie es eigentlich gewesen*' ('as it actually happened') but rather present it as an interpretation of the past.¹¹ Regrettably, in terms of Muslim women this thesis will fail the Bechdel Test in that there are not enough female voices or perspectives. This is largely due to the fact that almost all identified Muslim settlers for the period were male. This point is compounded by a scarcity of sources and a tendency towards Muslim communal homosociality. It would indeed be fascinating and instructive to explore the variable continuities in female immigration and settlement experiences (such as the distribution of labour) but this well may be one of the central weaknesses of my entire thesis:

¹⁰ Charles Issawi, *An Arab Philosophy of History* (Princeton, Darwin Press: 1987).

¹¹ Leopold von Ranke, *Geschichten der romanischen und germanischen Völker: von 1494 bis 1535* (Leipzig: Reimer, 1824), p. VI.

a serious paucity of feminine perspectives. Female subculture or autonomy inside the Muslim minority itself takes on what seems to me to be infinitely subtle forms that may be manifestations of leverage but are simultaneously (for obvious reason of discretion if nothing else) very difficult to tease out and examine precisely. Eliciting how gender intersects with other nodes of group identity remains therefore outside the scope and trajectory of my research. In fact choice of particular Muslims to be represented in this thesis has been further complicated by the obvious limitations of space and resource material. I realized early on that it would be impractical to identify each and every Muslim migrant, refugee and convert by name, if the text was not to rapidly degenerate into a dull list of names, dates, classifications, categories and pithy quotations. Historians often recall poor old Lord Acton and his endless pursuit of all the documentary evidence. Consequently the historical material is not always presented in a rigid line of march so to speak.

Nevertheless I believe there are some obvious historical trends and issues that are worth adhering to. There are some Muslim individuals who may receive more intense examination and more extensive discussion than others simply because I think they are more significant to the study here or simply more interesting. For example Mazhar Krasniqi from Kosova always secures my attention because my research has led me to conclude that he stood as an icon of moral authority within the wider national Muslim minority in his heyday during the 1970s and 1980s. To some extent this relative subjectivity is unavoidable but it goes without saying that the comparative stretches of attention are not always intended as a measure of their intrinsic personal importance. My final choices are based on three specific and mechanical considerations here: extant data, historical significance and contemporary interest. Even so I have been obliged to omit or neglect issues that deserve better attention or individuals who have been covered elsewhere in depth (for example Saleh Mahomet or Ice Cream Charlie in Richard Greenaway's brilliant and much neglected book *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief*)¹². The period covered here can sometimes be interspersed with what can only politely be described as fertile apocrypha (the uneven mix of information and adulation inside community newsletters is one example here). In my efforts to trim the fat I may well have excised or downplayed some figures or issues. As James Belich pointed out 'History is often a matter of improving best guesses.'¹³ One further note is that the Muslim community remains comparatively youthful in relation to the wider population, so there are no geriatric issues to examine.

¹² L.N. Greenaway, *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief: Biographies of Canterbury Personalities Written for the Millennium and for the 150th Anniversary of the Canterbury Settlement* (Christchurch: Christchurch City Libraries, 2000).

¹³ James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Auckland: Allen Lane / Penguin, 1996), p. 36.

Within the rubric of researching contemporary history, commenting on recent history can present many unique and opaque challenges. The immediacy of the era itself and the folk concerned, the patterns and purposes of the community and its leadership, can conjure up strong partisan sentiments within the community under scrutiny and raise obstacles to research (access to materials for example). There is an ongoing *Jihad* so to speak between the powerful necessity to articulate and preserve religious and popular bias and fixed perceptions on issues, and equally obstinate facts that demonstrate them incorrect or inaccurate. A historian of ancient Greece or Rome for example can repeat common knowledge or popular opinions, or touch up existing portraits with fresh paint. The historian commenting on contemporary religion or the adherents of a living faith must tread very carefully and often under the Argus eyes of the persons concerned themselves, their immediate descendants or acolytes. Where necessary one must be careful to preserve the personal anonymity of both informants and the various *dramatis personae* they discuss on stage. On the one hand I see little purpose in naming each and every single individual responsible for particularly unwise policies, ideas, verbal expressions or social blunders (even with documentary evidence) and listing their mistakes in office unless it serves a very specific educational purpose. On the other hand the very process of discussing the past affairs of the Muslim community requires some clarity and illumination in order to extrapolate exactly what happened (and of course, who was not responsible!). Yet preserving the pious anonymity of early Muslim Association office bearers for example could easily serve only to obscure events to the point of total incomprehension. As sociologist Paul Connerton observed in 1989: ‘Concerning social memory in particular, we may note that images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order. It is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory.’¹⁴ Having made that point, it must also be noted that very few Muslim community leaders have taken much interest, publicly, in the history of the minority itself (beyond immediate family or ethnic identification). We know that psychologically people tend to turn to the past when the future is uncertain and perhaps they are looking at past ways of dealing with issues. Partly because of the multi-ethnic nature of the entire Muslim community at present, there is a tendency to conceptualise history simplistically in rather overly-idealized terms of the Prophet Muhammad and the *Rashidun* and emphasize these rather ancient characters, biographies, themes and tropes (rather than explain, say, the Taj Mahal or Mullah Nasrudeen). New Zealand Muslim communal literature, such as it is, started to develop in the late 1970s and tended to stress an imaginary ‘Golden Age’ of Islam rather than the 1400 years between then and now, with obvious intellectual repercussions.

¹⁴ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 3.

In every era historians frequently compete against serious misunderstandings forged by swifter media (whether the Telegraph or the Internet) that can communicate data superabundant in dubious and incoherent historical assumptions. We currently seem to live in an era obsessed with isolated acts of terrorism perpetrated by Muslims and these matters are certainly not the focus of my work here. However, like all histories this thesis is a product of its times because I believe historical narratives tend towards dullness when they do not reveal something of the author's sympathies. In recent years I am very aware that whilst academic circles have increasingly focused on well researched positivist analyses of Islam and Muslims (especially in the light of Edward Said), regrettably much media (and therefore public comprehension) remains rooted in archaic, negative and dated perceptions and stereotypes. These myths persist in many respects. Said (1935 – 2003) is best remembered for his ground-breaking 1978 book *Orientalism* in which he outlined the aims and methods of traditional Western scholarship of an intellectually constructed 'East' that was intrinsically linked to colonial and imperial objectives in the fields of power and economics. He concluded that all such research and study was academically suspect and open to serious criticism and re-evaluation.

Historical Overview: Literature and Sources

The New Zealand Muslim community has been the subject of some useful scholarship and intra-mural literature of varying quality within New Zealand. However the relative absence or marginalisation of religion from mainstream New Zealand history has been a significant hindrance for my research.¹⁵ Several university academics and journalists have written thematically and methodologically about various aspects of the history of the minority or pertinent issues, and an overview of these is in order. Local Muslims, as represented by elected leaders and spokespersons, invariably present 'the facts' in a strictly linear – if hopelessly myopic – manner when called upon to discuss their communal history and I will also examine this briefly. In this study I have drawn upon a wide variety of sources - all accessible here in New Zealand and all in English. Although there is some limited Muslim non-English material about New Zealand, it is seldom related to history or the local Muslim minority here. Nasser Al Aboudi's book *Itlalah a'la Nehayat Al-a'alam Al-Janoobi* (A View of the ends of the Southern World) is the only relevant title that comes even close to the subject matter. Al Aboudi was a Saudi writer who briefly visited the North Island of New Zealand and wrote a book of his travels here and to Tasmania over 1981 and 1982; he

¹⁵ John Stenhouse makes point vividly clear in his chapter of the *New Oxford History of New Zealand*, where he discusses one New Zealand historian describing the 'withering' of the church in one paragraph and the 'stranglehold' of the church a few decades later, within the same essay! See: Stenhouse, J. 'Religion and Society', ed. by G. Byrnes, *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press Australia & New Zealand, 2009), pp.323-356.

provides an interesting snapshot of the Muslim community during this period.¹⁶ Other sources - diaries or memoirs - may be unpublished or otherwise unavailable at this point.

To start with there is the collected writing of William Shepard, formerly of Canterbury University. Since 1982 Shepard has regularly written academic articles outlining with meticulous detail the history and development of the New Zealand Muslim minority, exploring phenomenological matters and touching upon the halal issue. His perspective and fundamental conclusions as presented variously in *The Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* remain essentially *sine qua non* unchallenged here and are axiomatic to a broader comprehension of the New Zealand Muslim community.¹⁷

Erich Kolig, formerly of Otago University, has also written extensively on the local Muslim community although his focus has been anthropological rather than historical. His work is particularly important for exploring ideas and prevailing theological philosophies within the New Zealand Muslim minority in relation to localised and contemporary contexts. Within his spirited study, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism* (2009), Kolig has argued for a better understanding of the intellectual developments slowly occurring (sometimes painfully so) within the local Muslim community.¹⁸ Kolig studies the important features of Islam in a general sense and contemporary Muslim society from the standpoint of traditional Western cultural anthropology in relation to New Zealand political and social contexts. He explores sartorial dress codes and gender issues, food and dietary regulations and prohibitions, and other such matters that rise from Islamic doctrine, focusing on cultural variation among Muslims in New Zealand. In terms of

¹⁶ Nasser Al-Aboudi, *Itlalah a'la Nehayat Al-a'alam Al-Janoobi* (A View of the Ends of the Southern World) (Mecca: Al-Safa Printers, 1984).

¹⁷ See : William Shepard, 'Muslims in New Zealand', *The Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Volume 4, Numbers 1-2 (Riyadh: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, 1982), pp. 60-81; William Shepard, 'Muslims in New Zealand', *The Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Volume 16, Number 2 (Riyadh: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, 1996), pp.211-232; William Shepard, 'Muslims in New Zealand', *Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible*, ed. by Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith, (Lanham, MD:Altamira Press, 2002); William Shepard, 'New Zealand's Muslims And Their Organisations', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 8, Number 2 (December 2006), pp. 8-44; William Shepard, 'The Islamic Contribution: Muslims in New Zealand', *Religion in New Zealand Society*, Second Edition, ed. by Brian Colless and Peter Donovan (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1985), pp. 181-213; William Shepard, 'The Muslim Community in New Zealand', *Indians in New Zealand*, ed. K.N. Tiwari (Wellington: Price-Milburn, 1980); William Shepard and Michael Humphrey, 'Australia and New Zealand', *Islam Outside the Arab World*, ed. by David Westerlund and Ingvar Svanberg, (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 1999), pp. 278-294.

¹⁸ See: Erich Kolig, 'A Gordian Knot of Rights and Duties: New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 8, Number 2 (December 2006), p.45; Erich Kolig, 'An Accord of Cautious Distance : Muslims in New Zealand, Ethnic Relations and Image Management', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 5, Number 1 (June, 2003), pp. 24-50; Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism (Muslim Minorities)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

methodology this means Kolig relies more on personal interviews and observations, and other forms of direct communications with Muslims, than many other scholars, and comparatively less on documentary evidence (such as newspaper articles, community publications and so forth). Jacqueline Leckie, also of Otago University, has studied the wider Indian minority within New Zealand extensively for four decades and her research is an invaluable tool since many of the important early Muslim settlers here were of South Asian heritage.¹⁹ Finally, Peter Lineham has also written an overview essay regarding the demographic history of Muslims in New Zealand that touches upon Sir John Cracroft Wilson and his Indian servants. Lineham argues somewhat contentiously that the majority of Muslims across all New Zealand between the 1850s and up to the 1950s were from the Indian subcontinent. However he does not provide personal details (such as biographies) and does not explore those individuals outside the Indian cultural milieu, such as I have explored and elucidated in my thesis.²⁰

My hope is that my own work will add to the corpus of Shepard, Kolig, Leckie and others in that all of these scholars have approached the subject matter from the perspective of religious studies, sociology or anthropology. My approach will be focused on historical dimensions whilst these scholars have employed history as a background to their focal fields of study and interest. The descriptive and analytical role of history obliges us to primarily perceive the events and issues as a set or network of vital observations with social and religious foresights, rather than the other way around. I believe there is a gap in the literature however and room for a robust in-depth historical analysis. My aim is to complement and elucidate rather than challenge or replace. There are also a variety of useful alternate academic articles and sources that I also draw upon or refer to. These are items that focus on an area or subject adjacent to my own field of study but contain useful or pertinent information.²¹ Further I make extensive reference to media coverage (primarily newspapers, but also including radio

¹⁹ See: Jacqueline Valerie Leckie, *Indian Settlers: The Story of a New Zealand South Asian Community*, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007); Jacqueline Valerie Leckie, *Localising Asia in Aotearoa* (Auckland: Dunmore, 2011); Jacqueline Valerie Leckie, 'They Sleep Standing Up: Gujaratis in New Zealand to 1945', Unpublished doctoral thesis (University of Otago, 1981).

²⁰ Peter Lineham, 'The Historical Demography of New Zealand Islam', Paper given at the Ponsonby Mosque, 11 April 2011; accessed 13 June 2016.

http://www.academia.edu/7233623/The_Historical_Demography_of_New_Zealand_Islam

²¹ See: Ian Clarke, 'Essentialising Islam: Multiculturalism and Islamic Politics in New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 8, Number 2 (December 2006), p.69; William Hewat McLeod, *Punjabis in New Zealand: A history of Punjabi migration, 1890-1940*. (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1986); *Punjab to Aotearoa: Migration and Settlement of Punjabis in New Zealand 1890-1990*, with S. S. Bhullar. (Hamilton: New Zealand Indian Association Country Section (Inc.), 1992); Christopher Van der Krogt, 'Islam', *Religions of New Zealanders*, ed. by Peter Donovan (Palmerston. North: Dunmore Press, 1990), pp.186-205; Melissa Wan-Hassan, 'The Demand for Halal Food among Muslim Travellers in New Zealand', ed. by C.M. Hall, L. Sharples, R. Mitchell, B. Cambourne and N. Macionis *Food Tourism Around the World: Developments, Management and Markets* (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2003).

and television when appropriate). The most useful newspapers are those of Canterbury and Otago: *The Press* and *Star* in Christchurch, and the *Otago Daily Times* of Dunedin, in particular. Recent work on the 'Papers Past' website has also opened up an invaluable resource to researchers - allowing students to peruse (literally) volumes of data in minutes through a careful employment of the search functions. One should also remember though, that the nature of media tends towards sensationalism and the extraordinary, rather than in depth enquiry or facts. We also need to recall also that such documents are essentially the product of an educated elite – or in some cases semi-educated – usually drawn from the WASP portion of society (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants). Or in the case of New Zealand: White Anglo-Celtic Protestants. Although the complex processes of media examination and differentiation of the colonisers and the colonised is beyond the scope of this thesis, such material and data remain useful if we consistently bear in mind that it has always been prepared and presented by those societal classes holding power and reflects their conceptual perceptions on matters, their classification and categorisation of information (and peoples). Furthermore I will also make extensive reference from time to time of my own history essays and material published both within and outside New Zealand in various newspapers and journals.²²

With regard to the establishment of the Muslim Association of Canterbury another more complex and challenging source that I wish to utilise involves an analysis of the annual reports, miscellaneous topical reports, meeting minutes, relevant correspondence, pamphlets, and various publications of the Association itself and the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ, the national Muslim organisation after 1979), and other Muslim individuals and organisations. This will include periodic references to community newsletters and newspapers (particularly the Auckland based *Indian Newslink* and the now defunct *Al Mujaddid*). Documents of Muslim organisations, especially FIANZ, are problematic and need to be studied with caution for the simple reason that these sometimes demonstrate or manifest a degree of wishful thinking that borders on phantasmagoria or apocrypha. Potentially these can be an exceedingly useful resource – meeting minutes, annual reports and newsletters and so forth can be very revealing of the putative inner workings of the community and its perception of itself. Surprisingly, this source has been underutilised by scholars. There are two reasons for this. Firstly much that counts as recent

²² See: Abdullah Drury, 'A Time for Muslims to Examine Faith', *The Nelson Mail*, 5 August 2008, p.9; Abdullah Drury, 'Crucial Element Locked in Past', *The New Zealand Herald (NZH)*, 25 September 2007, p. A13; Abdullah Drury, 'Halal Certification of Growing Value', *The Otago Daily Times*, 27 April 2007, p.30; Abdullah Drury, 'Home Country Doctrine Splits Once-Unified Local Muslims', *NZH*, 12 July 2006, p. A17; Abdullah Drury, 'Integration Effort Needed', *The Press(PR)*, 2 August 2005, p.5.

history such as personal correspondence between mosque office bearers is still under lock and key, and often closely guarded. Secondly, much of the older material has simply been mislaid or lost irreparably. For this study I have perused the extant papers of the Muslim Association of Canterbury and FIANZ. Finally we must bear in mind that ‘in-house’ histories prepared by mosque leaders, even short ones presented as unbiased and formative accounts, are particularly partisan. In fact these usually have the function of reinforcing a very subjective *Weltanschauung* with regards to the powers of historical interpretation by the existing communal hierarchy. History is sometimes understood to be primarily a discursive construction, and some professional historians perceive communal myths as an obstruction to their real work – they often fail to adequately grasp the fuller significance for the persons or groups involved, or the role that a myth may play within an analysis of discourses that created the historical re-construction in the first place.

In addition, I make use of the government census reports and miscellaneous material in the National Archives when and where these are relevant. The extensive records of the National Library, National Archives, court and cemetery records, relevant data from Births/Deaths/Marriages are all similarly invaluable. Court records and reports are an interesting and sometimes critical way to obtain biographical details and to build up a profile of a community. This data can be very helpful as it can determine if, when, who, why, and where certain folk are or were. The absence of a central repository office for vital information about individuals remains one of the ongoing criticisms directed at contemporary Muslim community leadership, as it is arduous to put all this material together without considerable effort and academic advice. Census records must be utilised with a careful measure. Not only have the earliest and original census manuscripts been actively destroyed, and thus lost to history, we must remember that such documents were prepared and presented by those social groups in power. The information contained therein represents to some extent their elite perspectives, interests and priorities.

Spelling and grammar in New Zealand newspapers, publications or official documents during this period, whether of Muslim names or otherwise, vary enormously. For example the popular name ‘Muhammed’ is spelt several different ways, most notably Mahomet, Mohamet, Mahomed and Mohamed. Muslim personal names are frequently spelt in a variety of fashions and I have not corrected these when citing from original texts. I have also found various basic rules of print being broken in many prominent newspapers (‘street’ spelt all in lower case letters for instance, American spelling for several words, or capital letters being employed in the middle of sentences for no apparent reason). Community publications such as newsletters also pose similar challenges with the same name being misspelt, or perhaps

mis-transliterated, sometimes two or three differing ways inside the same edition. As much as possible I have tried to be consistent in my own spelling but I have also left glaring inaccuracies where these are direct quotes from primary source documents as I believe this helps to flesh out the sense of the original material. I have minimised employment of '(sic)' in my text so as not to distract the reader unnecessarily. This point also illustrates the trials facing the researcher in this field.

Thesis Outline

Following this introductory chapter my study starts with the arrival of the first Muslim family in New Zealand – Mahomet and Mindia Wuzerah in Christchurch in the 1850s. I examine the available material on Wuzerah and other later 'Mahometans' of the nineteenth century, many of them sailors and hawkers. It was only 20 years after the Treaty of Waitangi was signed and legally New Zealand was a new political and social entity. It is always worth bearing mind that whilst modern this is an avowed secular state and society, Anglo-European Christianity has been the dominant faith around which societal norms are drawn and derived. Curiously at this nascent point religious affiliation is largely unchallenged and when Wuzerah wants to swear an oath in court on the Holy Quran he is fully entitled and encouraged to do so.

The third chapter will provide an overview of the South Island Muslim minority to the 1970s. This is essentially a story of students, immigrants, refugees and converts to Islam. I will also take the time here to introduce and explore the terms 'community' and 'minority' which are often used interchangeably, facilitating ongoing confusion on the precise definitions. Over time these words are utilized by differing writers in differing fields of study to elucidate and interpret wildly differing abstract sociological entities of various boundaries and sizes. A community can be defined as a distinct social unit sharing a common space – geographic, topographic or religious. This differs from a minority who are a 'relatively small group of people differing from the majority.'²³ One of my intentions here is to demonstrate the almost infinite malleability of these thoroughly labile terms. They remain essential and even axiomatic ideas here, but ones that must always be understood to be flexible and fluid.

In Chapter four I will examine the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in May 1977 and the establishment of the first South Island Islamic Centre in Phillipstown in 1978. Aside from the basic religious functions and indeed functionality, the facility immediately became the primary locus of minority communal identity. This visual and symbolic expression inside the urban environment allows us to understand how cultural memory is

²³ *Paperback Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 478.

employed spatially and to some extent re-invented for the needs for an evolving community. This chapter will elucidate the challenges of immigrant communal leadership as it evolved over the 1960s and 1970s, and the role of overseas students and the formation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in 1977. It ends with the construction of the first mosque in the South Island, the aims and objectives behind this move, and an overview of Islamic group solidarity in this period.

The fifth chapter will explore the first few years of the Christchurch mosque and discuss the evolving place of Dawah in New Zealand Islam. (Dawah, also spelt Da'wah and Daawa, is an Arabic gerund of a verb meaning 'call' or 'invitation'). I will also explain how the communal tensions that did arise were handled and how this laid the groundwork for future issues, discussions and debates. One outstanding criticism that will most certainly be foremost in the readers' mind will be the incessantly fluctuating quality of leadership here - from excellent to ordinary - and the inter-related dynamics of social mechanisms of integration. Above all the temporal focus of my inquiry will be the impact of the first Muslim institution on the South Island Muslim community. I will then briefly elucidate how Islamic theology was articulated and conceptualised.

The penultimate chapter will extrapolate the creation of the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) in 1979 and the origins and development of Halal food certification and trade. In both cases these will be examined from the perspective and experience of South Island Muslims as these relate significantly to the continuity of their social and economic framework. Finally this chapter will also investigate briefly the growing plethora of overseas publications on Islam that started to circulate around and throughout the Muslim community at the time and often served as the first Islamic literature inside mosques in New Zealand. The contrast between these two sources or publications, in style and content, reveals much about the nature of the nascent Muslim community.

The final chapter will review my general conclusions. I believe a study of the people, events and issues of South Island Muslims presents the reader with a nuanced degree of insight, a sort of *reductio ad absurdum* of the broader picture of Islam in the South Pacific over the past 100 years. An integrated approach to exploring the gradual development of the Muslim minority and the establishment of the Muslim Association holds many benefits. We can better comprehend the totality of the events and issues by explaining these interconnections and intersections.

Concluding Remarks

There is, I believe, enough raw material to undertake a valid inspection of the early development of Islam and the Muslim community in the South Island. The questions raised in my thesis are pedagogic in nature. How exactly did Islam spread here? What were the determining factors and hermeneutical paradigms? What form of Islam is articulated and practiced here? How much does South Island Islam differ from that of normative or mainstream Islam? (and why?) Although beyond the scope of my study, I suspect an investigation into the geographic origins of Muslim minority leadership would be very fruitful. It often seems to me that the individuals who cope best inside New Zealand are those from multi-cultural or mixed race/religion societies. Conversely the more dogmatic ideologues disproportionately hail from lands where non-Muslims are much rarer.

The presence of literature by Sayyid Qutb in the mosque library may be mentioned in passing but this is not the place for an in depth analysis of his works *per se*. It must be stressed that for all the assertions of an inherent egalitarianism in Islam, there is in fact a decided reality to social classifications and various concepts of hierarchy. Community newsletters for example are replete with a vocabulary of power relations, moral authority and submission.

The job of any scholar is essentially the horrible challenge of affecting to characterize concisely and accurately the life's work and efforts of dozens if not hundreds of different people over long periods of time – all within a few short pages. Ultimately, if concord and unity are the crucial starting points for communal progress and development, then the discursive strength of faith can be seen here to serve as a useful nodal point in the logical framework of this world view. A critical and incisive examination of the past is vital to any such communal discourse and the absence of such should serve as a cause for concern. Comprehending history is of course axiomatic to achieving social and educational progress and in many respects a failure to study and learn from past mistakes and errors (in policies, decisions or actions) is perhaps worse than the mistake itself. A good dialectical knowledge of history will illuminate the present state of affairs rather than delude with negative, romantic, sentimental or paralysing fantasies.

CHAPTER TWO

Empire's Reach:

Muslim Migrants to the Mainland in the Nineteenth Century

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a very broad outline of the early years of Muslim immigration into New Zealand, and the South Island in particular, by exploring the socio-cultural and legal framework and how this is reflected in the biographies of various migrants. This chapter is made up of four parts. To start with I will provide a broad overview of the Muslim experience in New Zealand in the nineteenth century – touching briefly on the key issues and dates, and the role of both India and religion inside this country during this period. I will then examine the broad legal and societal framework into which the early Muslim visitors and settlers arrived. Early Muslim settlement, as exemplified by the first identifiable Muslim family to settle here, was entirely connected to British colonization. The following section will explore the first court case involving this family that occurred within a few years of their arrival. I will then study their intimate association with a prominent British settler, Sir John Cracroft-Wilson. I will address the demise of the family members, drawing particular attention to the sympathetic obituary for one that was reproduced in newspapers across the country. One of the key questions here is what exactly is the significance of Wuzerah and family and the process of migration? This chapter shows that, apart from one family, almost all the Muslim men who arrived here (and they were all males) came as individuals and had little or nothing to do with one another; they were almost all disassociated to the extent that, so far as we can determine, they never came together to pray in congregation, for example. We have no evidence that they were either aware of each other or in contact with one another.²⁴

Overview of Early Muslim Experience in New Zealand

The appearance of the first Muslims in the South Island, and indeed all New Zealand, is usually dated at March 1874 when the government population census recorded 15 ‘Chinese Mahometans’ living in Dunstan, working in the gold fields.²⁵ This is the received wisdom

²⁴ Not that we can rule that prospect out entirely.

²⁵ ‘*Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken for the Night of the 1st of March, 1874*’ (Wellington, 1875), pp. 56-57.

that appears in nearly all publications on the subject.²⁶ However recent research by Todd Nachowitz has revealed a brief visit to Northland by two Indian Muslim sailors – lascars – in December 1769 on board a French ship named the *Saint Jean-Baptiste* captained by Jean François Marie de Surville pursuing trade opportunities from Pondicherry (the French colony in India). The crew Muster Roll included ‘Mamouth Cassem’ – presumably Mahmud Qasim – and a 16 year old Bengali named ‘Nasrin’.²⁷ After this date many British East India Company ships with lascar crews and even a few sepoys (Indian soldiers) visited New Zealand.²⁸ In the 1800s a Bengali was known to have jumped ship and settled with Maori tribes in the Bay of Islands, whilst in the South Island a group of six such lascars similarly deserted their vessel in 1814. A sailor from this group was living with his Maori wife on Stewart Island in 1844.²⁹ Whether these men were Muslim or Hindu remains unknown, at this stage. The role of lascars or Asian and foreign sailors in New Zealand ports is an under-researched field of study, but no doubt one that played some part or contributed to the formulation of popular perceptions of Muslims by Pakeha. Some lascars and Indian sailors came to the attention of early Europeans through the medium of newspaper reports of court cases involving sailors. For example in 1908 the *Wanganui Herald* relayed a Wellington story where ‘an Arab named Mohaed Cheriff (sic) was today fined 40s and costs on a charge of having unlawfully disobeyed the commands of the captain’³⁰. Others were more sober and respectful. In 1930, for instance, when Abdul Berrick died after an accident onboard the steamer *Roserick*, his death at Westport was reported considerably nationwide. The *Auckland Star* wrote: ‘The burial with Mohammedan rites took place ... in the presence of about sixty of the deceased’s countrymen. The ceremony was most impressive.’³¹ Unfortunately the edition of the local newspaper, the *Westport Times and Star*, which must have run the most thorough account, is no longer extant.

This chapter will demonstrate Wuzerah and his wife Mindia left India to work for Sir John Cracroft Wilson and settled near his estate in Cashmere, Christchurch, in 1854 – within fifteen years of the Treaty of Waitangi. The *Auckland Provincial Gazette* for September

²⁶ William Shepard, ‘Muslims in New Zealand’, *The Journal of the Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Volume 4, Numbers 1-2 (Riyadh: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs, 1982), pp. 60-81; “Did you know that”, *Al-Muslim* (1992), p.8; Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism (Muslim Minorities)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p.21.

²⁷ Todd Nachowitz, ‘Towards a Framework of *Deep Diversity*: Identity and Invisibility in the Indian Diaspora in New Zealand’ (University of Waikato, 2015), pp.206-207.

²⁸ Jacqueline V. Leckie, *Localising Asia in Aotearoa* (Auckland: Dunmore, 2011), p. 21.

²⁹ Richard A. Cruise, *Journal of a Ten Month Residence in New Zealand* (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1957), p.215; Leckie, *Indian Settlers: The Story of a New Zealand South Asian community* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2007), p. 21-22.

³⁰ ‘Trouble with an Arab Seaman’, *The Wanganui Herald (WH)*, 26 June 1908, p. 5; ‘Mohaed’ is presumably a typo and more accurately rendered ‘Mohamed’, ‘Cheriff’ is probably better ‘Sheriff’.

³¹ ‘Arab Seaman Killed’, *The Auckland Star (AS)*, 16 April 1930, p. 18; See also: ‘Fatal Fall Down Hold’, *The New Zealand Herald (NZH)*, 16 April 1930, p. 14.

1855 recorded the presence of two ‘Musselmans’ listed in the section of religion and whilst the most likely supposition is that these are Indian lascars on British ships, the same document suggests there was at least one ‘Turk’ present in the city and newspapers report a French convert to Islam, Ali ben Sou-alle, visiting Auckland at the very month when that census was taken.³²

Whilst much of the bias inherent in New Zealand history from the nineteenth century has been overwhelmingly Christian (and Protestant), there is no real or institutionalised religious or cultural intolerance in any legal sense. The Treaty of Waitangi itself contains only a few passing lines about faith in general as Hobson did not see the need to state or regulate freedom of religion (a rather blithe sentiment that persists today within New Zealand society). A fourth article was added to the Maori text of the Treaty at the request of the Roman Catholic Bishop Jean Baptiste Pompallier: ‘The Governor says that the several faiths (beliefs) of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome and also of Maori custom shall alike be protected by him.’³³ Consequently personal prejudices remain but are seldom overt and are somewhat constrained within a broad umbrella of official tolerance. In May 1870 the Dunedin Mutual Improvement Society vigorously debated the issue ‘Was Mahomet an impostor’ at a hall below the New Athenaeum but there has never been a great appetite for anti-Islamic sentiment in this country.³⁴ Such public discussions were part of general discourse that reflected a philosophical enquiry rather than any overt or ongoing societal prejudice against Islam or individual Muslims. However, as Erich Kolig states so succinctly in *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism*:

The viscous process of creating a culturally multichromatic society, engendering officially recognised differentiated forms of citizenship and embracing differences as enrichment, not a burden, has hardly gained momentum.³⁵

One might also note here that New Zealand society, even before the advent of the Europeans, has always been a land of distinct but overlapping and competing tribes and subcultures.

Ultimately no society or culture can sensibly function without some kind of religious or spiritual background or informative ethos, however remote or proximate. New Zealand was a

³² *Auckland Provincial Government Gazette*, Volume 3 No 28 (26 September 1855), p.190; ‘Port of Auckland’, *Daily Southern Cross*, 2 March 1855, Page 2; ‘Wellington’, *Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle (NENZC)*, 21 April 1855, p. 3.

³³ Claudia Orange, *An Illustrated History of the Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2004, Second Edition), p. 32.

³⁴ ‘The Otago Daily Times’, *The Otago Daily Times (ODT)*, 18 May 1870, p. 2; ‘The Evening Star’, *The Evening Star*, 11 May 1870, p. 2.

³⁵ Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 3.

formal British colony between July 1841 and September 1907³⁶, during which time many of the earliest Muslim forerunners and settlers arrived, and it is no coincidence that many were from British India. Arguably India played an important role in the development and colonisation of New Zealand, more so than normally credited. Not only are there British-Indian place names in abundance but, as Leckie has illustrated, there was a plethora of Indian settlers (primarily Hindu and Sikh but also Muslim and Christian) who contributed to the development of modern New Zealand. The significance of these early Muslim settlers and sojourners is easier to elucidate. Just as the pioneers of Pakeha society had an influence on the subsequent development of the British colony and the British-European society that formed thereafter, so too was the part played by these early Muslims to the later formation of the Islamic minority. If British and European sailors, whalers, merchants and missionaries (of pre-1840 New Zealand) laid the foundations of Pakeha identity and institutions, then so too did these Muslim migrant pioneers (such as Mohammad Kara) in establishing Muslim identity in the twentieth century.

As noted above, most contemporary accounts by New Zealand Muslims start at the 1874 date and usually leapfrog to the formal foundations of a registered Muslim organisation or the arrival of a specific named pioneer - selectively compressing or telescoping other names, personalities, dates and issues without any reference to prior or intervening tropes. Thus, these accounts assert a measure of antiquity of Muslim presence in this country without any close historical investigation. Hence, New Zealand Muslim history has suffered from some neglect and oversimplification. The problem with myths and stereotypes is that they can become self-fulfilling. People forget the complexities of life in past days and impose later values and perspectives. It seems fair to conclude that many of these early Muslim forerunners, lacking access to Islamic institutions and associated spiritual leadership or guidance, largely assimilated into the societal environment around them as best they could, without overly worrying about either the *Sunnah* (the customs and words of the Prophet) or the Shariah (Islamic law). Presumably they were guided more by economic or possibly social imperatives rather any theological precepts.

The remainder of this chapter attempts to provide a detailed analysis of specific individuals and to interrogate the significance of their experience in an attempt to redress some of this historical neglect.

³⁶ New Zealand became a Dominion thereafter until 1983 when it transformed legally into a Realm.

Muslim Migration and Social Context

A number of Muslim settlers came to the Crown colony of New Zealand from British India in the nineteenth century, and it is worth remembering that Muslims here have, in fact, never been particularly isolated from Pakeha society or from other Muslim sojourners. Although the Canterbury colony was in many respects an effort to re-create an idealised visage of England in the South Seas, it remained (like much of colonial New Zealand) in fact rather cosmopolitan in ethnic composition. Perhaps it should come as no surprise that Wuzerah and family came as servants to a prominent Anglo-Indian colonist. Other Muslims came as hawkers and some entered this country as sailors who either jumped ship or obtained employment in order to take up residence here. Although all were affected by increasingly discriminatory legislation governing immigration, it is worth bearing in mind that the target was racial prejudice rather than religious.³⁷ New Zealand law is deeply secular in theory and practice, and the Treaty of Waitangi institutionalizes freedom of religion, thereby implicitly affirming religious diversity. Legal discrimination concocted by British colonial society targeted biological Asians – especially the Chinese – rather than deracinated Muslims *per se* (or Hindus or Buddhists for that matter). Migration has a profound impact, naturally, on individuals and their sense of personal identity and Muslim perceptions of migration have traditionally been positive. It was after Muhammad fled to the city of Medina, for example, that he was able not only to preach and teach freely but also to enforce rules, regulations and rituals that emphasized religious communal unity over all other loyalties.

Strictly speaking between 1844 and 1881 practically anybody who arrived in New Zealand could take up residency (including non-British foreigners) and apply for naturalisation. The term ‘aliens’ itself was applied to all non-European migrants in various government documentation and censuses between 1881 and 1951 (thereafter becoming ‘other races’). This revealed a great deal about popular prejudices, the assumed or intrinsic social structures, and the privileged discourse of those in power. Folk from the Indian sub-continent were British citizens but still deemed to be foreign. Muslim migrants during this period are usually given extremely generic semantic classifications: Indian; and not Bengali or Tamil for example. This is doubly ironic because Indians are very specifically *not* a uniformly homogenous collective identity. The first major restrictions on foreign migrants was the 1881 Chinese Immigrants Act which targeted (as the title would imply) Chinese folk. However Muslim migrants from British India could enter New Zealand easily, at least until the 1899 Immigration Restriction Act. This was introduced by the Liberal Party led by Richard Seddon and effectively imposed an English language test for all potential immigrants from outside the British Isles. Despite the largess of suzerainty the British

³⁷ Leckie, *Localising Asia in Aotearoa*, p. 167.

government in fact objected strongly to proposed legislation discriminating against migrants from the subcontinent of India who were, after all, subjects of Her Majesty. The projected 1896 'Asiatic Restriction Act' was turned down flat by Whitehall. However the more carefully worded 1899 Act was used effectively, *de facto* if not *de jure*, to exclude as many Asians as possible. This was followed closely by the Immigration Restriction Act of 1908 which intended to reduce Chinese migration and impose strictures on their entry and departure to and from New Zealand. Over a decade later the Undesirable Immigrants Exclusion Act of 1919 aimed both at potential Asian immigrants but also those millions of displaced folk from Eastern Europe following World War One. This, in turn, was followed almost immediately by the 1920 Immigration Restriction Amendment Act (although excluding wives and children of Indian residents who had settled here before this date) that introduced a restrictive permit system for prospective immigrants from outside the British Isles. The New Zealand Customs Office came to control and regulate the country's immigration borders and migrants from lands outside the British Isles were only granted permission to enter at the personal discretion of the Minister of Internal Affairs. 'It became almost impossible for Indians not related to the Gujarat and Punjabi pioneers to settle in New Zealand before policy changes in 1974.'³⁸ However, there were minor if subtle changes to the laws throughout the 1920s under the Reform Party government. In 1923 long-term non-British alien residents of good character could apply for naturalisation and after 1928 anyone who had been legally naturalised anywhere at all inside the British Empire automatically became British subjects in New Zealand.

During and after World War Two New Zealand relaxed some of the more stringent regulations governing immigration laws and policies. This, and the drastic change of fortunes for Muslims in post-war India, influenced the decision of many Muslim Indian male residents to bring out their wives and children on a permanent basis. In particular the 1948 British Nationality and New Zealand Citizenship Act awarded New Zealand citizenship to all residents of New Zealand including naturalised foreigners. In 1951 there were further changes to the laws governing re-entry and immigration permits for long term Asian residents. However contradictions persisted. An internal 1953 Department of External Affairs memorandum confirmed:

Our immigration is based firmly on the principle that we are and intend to remain a country of European development. It is inevitably discriminatory against Asians – indeed against all persons who are not wholly of European race and colour. Whereas

³⁸ Leckie, *Localising Asia in Aotearoa*, p. 167.

we have done much to encourage immigration from Europe, we do everything to discourage it from Asia.³⁹

Elsewhere a public Memorandum from the New Zealand government, also in 1953, pronounced unequivocally: 'No statutory provision is at present in force which specifically restricts entry into New Zealand on the basis of race, religion or nationality.'⁴⁰ Jacqueline Leckie argues that this led to further 'localising' of the overall Indian community in New Zealand at the time.⁴¹ I assume this to mean that the Indian minority found it harder, although not impossible, to reinforce their overall numbers with further family migration (relatives, wives and so forth) and were obliged somewhat to adapt more to the predominant local society (language, dress, social conventions and so forth). Finally, with what seems in hindsight a poor grasp of the obvious consequent demographic changes, the 1987 Immigration Act abandoned the idea of preferential source country criteria so removing the traditional predilection for British migrants. Undertaken with little public discussion or debate, this law was essentially a massive transformation of the immigration regulations and patterns, treating all potential immigrants equally – regardless of place of birth, race or religion. 'The rapid diversification of immigration after 1987 has extensively altered the ethnic composition of New Zealand in a way that is historically unique.'⁴² These changes have led to an enormous influx of Asian migrants entering New Zealand, a significant minority of which were Muslim, and the entry of a large number of African migrant families for the first time in the history of this country.

It is also worth noting briefly here that Indians are often portrayed by outsiders as socially awkward and culturally insular, often possessed of an unhelpful prejudice against mixed marriages and an unwillingness to accept, accommodate or internalise cultural values or perspectives outside the orbit of traditional India.⁴³ Theoretically, for Indians coming to New Zealand this meant crossing the *Kala Pani* (black water) or ocean, and was something of a concern for devout Hindus. The idea and experience was not so worrying to Muslims, although broad cultural fears and shared prejudices must have lingered along with concerns about leaving the land of Islam for the lands of the Christians. In nineteenth century India devout Hindus often considered Anglo-Saxons as 'untouchable' and often refused to eat with them, thus restricting social intercourse and appreciation somewhat. For Indian Muslims,

³⁹ Memorandum. 'Immigration into New Zealand: International Problems', Department of External Affairs, 1953, NZNA, PM 323/3/18, Part 1.

⁴⁰ Memorandum by the New Zealand Government to the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration. Geneva, 1953, New Zealand National Archives, Wellington (NZNA), PM 108/ 34/1 Pt 10.

⁴¹ Leckie, *Localising Asia in Aotearoa*, p. 109.

⁴² Leckie, *Localising Asia in Aotearoa*, p. 112.

⁴³ Sudesh Mishra, *Diaspora Criticism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), p.104.

though, beyond the halal dietary regulations and restrictions (if indeed they were followed scrupulously), there were fewer reservations in settling in a new land with new smells, symbols, noises and myths of their accustomed subcontinent.

Wuzerah and his family were not entirely alone of course. There were other Muslims hovering around during this period, although they were not exactly swamped by co-religionists. For example in July 1861, an Arab named 'Mombarak' (Mubarak) was involved in a legal case tried at the Resident Magistrate's Court in Lyttelton. It is worth quoting at length for several reasons. Firstly, the episode demonstrates the presence of Muslim sailors from outside the Indian subcontinent (the lascars) pottering around on the margins of early colonial New Zealand society. Secondly, it reveals a lot about the behaviour and language used by British settlers towards racial and religious minorities at this period.

The complainant, who is an Arab of Muscat, a remarkably black man, a Mussulman, and rejoiced in the name of Mombarak, being sworn upon the Koran, said – The captain called me up to work at a time when I was unwell about three weeks ago; when I said I was unwell the captain struck me two or three times in the face and kicked me on the loins; he then went below and brought up the irons, which he fast fixed upon my wrist and fastened me to an eyebolt; he struck me again with his fist on my mouth and knocked out one of my teeth.⁴⁴

'Mussulman' or 'Moosalman' was a popular and widely employed nineteenth century English language adoption of the Turkish and Persian term corrupted from the Arabic *Muslimun* – meaning Muslims, plural. It turns up repeatedly in both newspaper accounts and official documents of the period.⁴⁵

Newspapers are an important source for historians, but naturally one must be on guard to some degree. Can the independent media fully account for or summarise serious cultural differences without simultaneously mystifying or obscuring it with stereotypes? Newspapers reflect the dominant cultural narratives and discourses of those in power. As such they cannot but help privilege the publisher, the writer and the majority of readers (in that order) and their particular cultural paradigms. Is it even possible to identify 'the Other' or explore cultural margins without supporting the perspectives and needs of the mainstream? Perhaps the arrival of Indian Muslim settlers and the presence of Arab sailors in various ports should come as no surprise. Indeed, as Belich commented in respect to the large number of Irish Catholics in the ranks of the British army in the 1860s Maori Land Wars: 'A key aspect of

⁴⁴ 'Resident Magistrate's Court', *Lyttelton Times (LT)*, 3 July 1861, p. 3.

⁴⁵ H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 1.

British imperialism was persuading its victims to conquer each other.’⁴⁶ After all, the Romans stationed North African recruits in *Provincia Britannia*. Conquest can be cultural and demographic as much as military.

In 1871 a solitary ‘Mussulman’ was identified in the regional census for Otago.⁴⁷ This is almost certainly Mahomet Khan, the earliest identifiable Muslim resident in the same region, who secured employment in the goldfields at Kyeburn around 1869. His surname indicates an Indian origin but he did not stay long and nothing more is known of him.⁴⁸ In the April 1874 census 15 Chinese ‘Mahometans’ were recorded in Otago. That report recorded a total of 17 Muslims in all New Zealand three were living in cities (one in Auckland and two in Dunedin), the other 14 were in the ‘goldfields’. From the regional statistics we can further determine geographically that there were 13 Muslims in Dunstan, one in Nokomai and one in Wakaia (in Southland). So far as is known, certainly from subsequent census records, none of these characters were there four years later and had presumably moved on (either to other goldfields in Australia) or returned to their homelands. These economic migrants certainly left no legacy, documentation, or records of their presence or activities. However these men, and this date of 1874, usually figure prominently in Muslim community accounts of the origins of Islam in New Zealand – partly because the details are happily nebulous, earlier information has been harder to detect and partly because the early time frame gives Islam some minor antiquity to these shores.⁴⁹ The 1878 national census stated the presence of 39 Mahometans (all male) in all the country but almost all were outside Otago so we assume no link to the 1874 Chinese goldminers.⁵⁰

Perhaps the first identifiable Muslim living in Dunedin in the 1870s was a turban-wearing Kashmiri from the Indian subcontinent named ‘Butterdean’ (presumably Badrudeen; literally ‘full moon of the faith’). He may well have been one of the two Muslims identified in the city in the 1874 census. We know little of the rest of his dress although in 1875 he was described as having ‘recently arrived in this Province’⁵¹ and was called into a court case as a witness:

⁴⁶ James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Auckland: Allen Lane / Penguin, 1996), p. 243.

⁴⁷ ‘Statistical’, *ODT*, 13 May 1877, p.7.

⁴⁸ ‘Transfer of interest in water race and claim - Mahomet Khan to Samuel Davidson – Kyeburn’, R24695973, DADO, 25368, D589, 111/232, Number 4701; ‘To Be Sold’, *Mount Ida Chronicle*, 16 April 1869, p. 2; ‘Letter Writing Extraordinary’, *Evening Star*, 15 November 1870, p. 2; ‘West Coast Times’, *West Coast Times*, 26 November 1870, p. 2.

⁴⁹ *Results of a Census of New Zealand Taken for the Night of the 1st of March, 1874*. (Wellington, 1875), pp. 57-58, 66, 68, 74.

⁵⁰ *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken for the Night of the 3rd of March, 1878* (Wellington, 1880), pp. 254, 256.

⁵¹ ‘The Otago Daily Times’, *ODT*, 24 June 1875, p. 2.

Butterdean, a Hindoo, employed by the defendant, appeared in Indian costume wearing the turban in court. He could speak a little English, and said he was a Mahommedan, born in Cashmere, where the Hindu form of oath is to join both hands and kiss them. It was suggested that Sale's translation of the Koran could be obtained in the Athenaeum. However, Herrman Brooke, a stepson of the defendant, acted as interpreter, and witness said he had been sworn in court before. His Worship remarked that Mahomet was sworn by placing his right hand on the Koran, and then touching it with his forehead: and when asked what that form meant, he explained that he was bound by it to speak the truth. Witness: 'Your Bible will do.' (Laughter). The witness having made this statement, and the Koran being founded upon the Old Testament, no objection could be made to the form proposed by him.⁵²

So far as the evidence implies, he was not required to remove his turban or headwear. It is also intriguing to note, as with the 1858 Wuzerah court case, the presence of a British settler fluent in Hindi. Butterdean continued: 'I swear, according to the custom of my country, and according to my religion, the Mahommedan religion, that I will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Witness (kissing Bible): Yes, I won't tell a lie.'⁵³ We do not know what happened to Butterdean – he does not appear elsewhere in New Zealand, so presumably moved on but his case and example are intriguing.

The city of Dunedin, the 'jewel in the colonial crown',⁵⁴ was from all accounts a lively cosmopolitan colony in the late nineteenth century with many a passing sailor and hawkers from across the globe representing many races, languages and faiths. In 1863 the first synagogue was established in Moray Place, in the centre of the city.⁵⁵ In 1888 the first identifiable Muslim death in Otago was recorded when Mohamed Dan passed away after a few days in port and was buried in an unmarked grave.⁵⁶ We also know that in 1894 father and son Saleh and Sultan Mahomet from Turkmenistan arrived and worked as hawkers across Otago and Westland, before relocating to Christchurch after the turn of the century (see below).⁵⁷ Elsewhere two hawkers, Abdul Borham (Burhan) and Soloman (Suleman) Shah, who both seem to have hailed from Bengal, or India at any rate, were involved in a

⁵² 'Resident Magistrate's Court', *ODT*, 24 June 1875, p. 3.

⁵³ 'Resident Magistrate's Court', *ODT*, 24 June 1875, p. 3.

⁵⁴ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 380.

⁵⁵ Charles Croot, *Dunedin Churches: Past and Present*. (Dunedin: Otago Settlers Association, 1999), pp. 63–64

⁵⁶ *The New Zealand Gazette*, 4 July 1889 (Wellington), p. 768.

⁵⁷ Ahad Baksh Malik (also known as Ahadbox Mullock and variant spellings) appears to have settled in central Otago around 1890. Described as a 'Mahometan hawker' he died in 1918 and was buried in Arrowtown, his service conducted by the Presbyterian Reverend James Rattray. See: Untitled, *Lake Wakatip Mail*, 24 December 1890, p.2; 'A Sudden Death', *Lake County Press*, 22 August 1918, p.5.

Dunedin court case in 1893.⁵⁸ A contemporary report in the Christchurch *Press* simply called him and Charles Abraham ‘Assyrians’⁵⁹ although the Christchurch *Star* presented Shah as ‘an Indian hawker’.⁶⁰ Unhelpfully, an earlier account in the Otago Daily Times simply called both Shah and Abdul Boreham ‘two Hindoos’ (sic) reflecting linguistic prejudices or ignorance.⁶¹ Shah was working in Christchurch by 1898 but that year the police had arrested him and escorted him back to Dunedin for failing to support his two illegitimate children by Isabella McGuire (Solomon McGuire in 1896 and Robert Gordon McGuire in 1897). Shah was represented by the famous Dunedin barrister Alfred Charles Hanlon (1866–1944): ‘Mr Hanlon appeared for the defendant, and said that complainant had given him to understand that she was willing to withdraw the information on the understanding that the defendant would, as soon as he was liberated, marry her.’⁶² They were indeed married in 1898 and the boys’ surnames were changed to Shah. The following year baby Olive Evelyn Shah was born on 12 June.⁶³ Shah senior died on 16 December 1909 and was buried at Sydenham. Borham (or Boreham), also ‘married to a European’ and ‘a British subject [and] and excellent character’ disappears from the records after 1904.⁶⁴

Two more ‘Syrians’ (possibly the same as above) provided some ‘Oriental flavour’ at the local Christchurch Magistrate’s Court in May 1901. In swearing an oath:

Mahomet Din, the defendant... [gave] an unintelligible answer, of which Sanscrit and Syriac were the dominant features, Mahomet’s counsel solved the difficulty by producing a copy of the Koran, and the witness, with childlike cheerfulness, swore a strange oath upon it, invoking God, Mahomet and Jesus, an oath which the Magistrate opined was ‘fairly comprehensive.’⁶⁵

These court cases, from the 1860s to the 1900s and beyond, are worth examining in detail because they reveal a degree of sympathy for individual Muslim witnesses that appears to contradict national legislation that suggests Pakeha society was deeply hostile to Asians. The impression quickly rises that there was a significant number of Muslim individuals pottering about the fringes of mainstream New Zealand society during this period.⁶⁶ In 1898 ‘Mahometan’ patients were even reported at both the Cromwell and Dunedin hospitals.⁶⁷

⁵⁸ ‘Resident Magistrate’s Court’, *ODT*, 4 November 1893, p. 3.

⁵⁹ ‘Ice Cream Vendors’, *The Press* (*PR*), 29 January 1902, p. 4.

⁶⁰ ‘The Ice-Cream Vendor’, *The Star* (*ST*), 7 April 1902, p. 3.

⁶¹ ‘Resident Magistrate’s Court’, *ODT*, 4 November 1893, p. 3.

⁶² ‘City-Police Court’, *ODT*, 2 August 1898, p. 8.

⁶³ ‘The Troubles of Solomon Shah’, *ST*, 10 April 1902, p. 2.

⁶⁴ ‘News of the Day’, *PR*, 19 May 1904, p.4.

⁶⁵ ‘The Week’, *ST*, 11 May 1901, p. 4; See also: ‘News of the Day’, *PR*, 7 May 1901, p.4.

⁶⁶ See also: ‘Magisterial’, *ST*, 25 August 1891, p.3; ‘Magisterial’, *PR*, 26 August 1891, p.2.

⁶⁷ ‘Hospitals and Charitable Institutions of the Colony (Report on the), By the Inspector of Hospitals’, *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1898 Session I, H-22, pp.13, 14.

Case Study, Part One: Wuzerah and the Court

In many respects contemporary New Zealand is partly founded on what Belich summarized as the self-conscious multi-faceted ‘myths of empire’⁶⁸. There is a certain irony to the point that the first identifiable Muslim immigrant family came to this proclaimed Arcadia as a direct component of the Imperial colonisation project from another part of the realm. Sir John Cracroft Wilson (1808 – 1881) came to Lyttelton in 1854 on a ship named (ironically perhaps) the *Akbar* (Arabic for ‘great’) and bought land on the Canterbury Plains, at the lower hills and the swamp at the southern base of the Port Hills. He named the property Cashmere after Kashmir in India.⁶⁹ Then Cracroft Wilson returned to India for a few years and came back to the Canterbury colony on 29 April 1859, this time on the screw steamship *Armenian* which he chartered personally.⁷⁰ It seems that Wuzerah and his family, and a few other Indian servants, had arrived on the *Akbar*. Certainly the March 1858 court case (below) would suggest that some came before Cracroft Wilson’s return in 1859.

Wuzerah’s precise identity is vague and even his full name remains nebulous. The word ‘Wazer’ stems from the Arabic *wezr* and literally mean ‘burden’; the implication being the person who holds this title is helping the boss to get his work undertaken properly - hence the title Wazir (or the Anglicised *Vizier*) is often employed to translate ‘Minister’ but can also be used to mean the butler. In turn Wazir / Wazira / Wuzer / Wuzera / Wuzerah can be a personal name, but it could be a work title. Wazira is also the name of a Pathan (Afghan) tribe and a village. Wuzerah may have been a Pathan or Afghan. The documents are of limited help and none identify a birthplace beyond simply ‘India’. The texts sometimes introduce him using a variant spelling of Wuzerah, followed by the suffix ‘a Mahomedan’ or ‘Moosalman’ (i.e. Muslim).⁷¹ Invariably he is referred to most constantly simply as Wuzerah. Even after thirty years residence in New Zealand, newspapers described him and his son Mero as ‘Indian natives’ (the *Star*) and ‘Hindoos’ (the *Press*).⁷² Interestingly his sons used variations of his first name as their surnames (in traditional Muslim custom) which were anglicised wildly from Wazero to Wiggers. Curiously there is some oblique evidence that they may have been Afghan-Pashtun folk. The four sons were named Pero, Mero, Noora and Rabbi. Pero and Nero could easily be Pir and Mir with the suffix ‘-o’ added. This is a popular Pashtun naming diminutive. Pero and Mero Wuzerah were born about 1852 in India,

⁶⁸ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 185.

⁶⁹ Rona Elizabeth Tolmie, ‘The Political Career of Sir John Cracroft Wilson in New Zealand’ MA thesis, (University of Canterbury, 1982); See also Cracroft Wilson’s diary: J.C. Wilson, ARC1989.50, Transcript of diary/recollections 1854 of Canterbury, 1-69, Transcript by Ron Chapman, 1989. Manuscript Collection, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, New Zealand.

⁷⁰ ‘Canterbury’, *NENZC*, 27 April 1859, p. 3.

⁷¹ ‘Resident Magistrate’s Court’, *LT*, 9 July 1859, p. 5; ‘Resident Magistrate’s Court’, *PR*, 8 October 1869, p. 3.

⁷² ‘Magisterial’, *ST*, 9 December 1886, p. 3; ‘Magisterial’, *PR*, 11 December 1886, p. 1.

and the other two boys appear to have been born at Cashmere about 1859 and 1861 respectively. There are no birth certificates, which suggests the births may have taken place under modest circumstances. Noora is clearly either a corruption of 'Noor' or 'Nuh' (Arabic for Noah) and Rabbi (who was later addressed as Robby) must be Rabi (Arabic for Spring). Rabbi Wuzerah was later known as Robert Wiggers, and Noora died as Noah.

The year 1858 saw the first New Zealand court case involving a Muslim. The original court documents are apparently no longer extant. However we do have the local newspaper record of the incident:

The case which occupied the Court to-day was an action brought against one Goorden, a native of India, by Wuzeera another Indian, for a robbery of some money from the house of the latter on the 27th September last. Both were servants of Mr. Wilson, of Cashmere. Both parties being ignorant of the English language, Mr. P. Ashton acted as interpreter, and the witnesses Wuzeera and his wife were sworn upon the Koran (English translation) and repeated the Mahometan formula and genuflexions of a solemn oath.⁷³

The case was that Wuzeerah and his wife Mindia had awoken in their bed in the night to find Goorden 'tugging at her necklace'. Wuzerah had physically restrained the man and escorted him to Lyttelton. Hindi and Urdu speaking court clerks and translators were available and so it seems many nineteenth century British bureaucrats in New Zealand had either spent time in, or studied for work, in India.

This issue of swearing an oath in court on the Quran is worth examining as it is one of the persistent issues facing New Zealand Muslims and is one that is frequently reported in the media. The Bosnian president-philosopher Alija Izetbegovic once wrote: 'The Quran is life, not literature. [...] Islam is a way of living rather than a way of thinking.'⁷⁴ Swearing an oath on a Quran, the *ipsissima verba dei* of the Muslim faith, demonstrates a commitment to Islam within colonial society (when the European Christian powers governed the world) and in a British settlement geographically so many thousands of miles away from either the epicentres of the Shariah court system or the global *ummah* (the international Muslim community, the word can be defined as the 'unifying principle holding together human social diversity within one overarching social entity').⁷⁵ The sound of the Quran being pronounced aloud may present an impenetrably raucous cacophony to the uninitiated but for

⁷³ 'Supreme Court Lyttelton', *LT*, 13 March 1858, p. 4; For the full newspaper account, see Appendices A.

⁷⁴ Alija Ali Izetbegovic, *Islam between East and West* (Plainfield: Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1999), p. xxx.

⁷⁵ Douglas Pratt, *The Challenge of Islam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.16.

a true Believer, a *Mu'min*, it articulates and demonstrates a profound attachment to his or her Islamic religious identity regardless of the land of domicile. Would a devout Muslim allow for an imposed designation or appellation that appertains to a dismissive or hostile interpretation of his faith and identity? Rather than evincing some measure of strongly held intellectual or political opinion, this more likely is a case of an individual recognising that they are completely unable to influence the enveloping society in which he resides. The experience of being an immigrant may indeed hone a person's private conceptualisations of identity (in this case Islamic as well as ethnic), but how exactly does this intersect with their communal or spiritual aspirations and needs? One might well ask, if the experience of living in New Zealand enhanced, distracted or weakened an individual Muslim's communal bonds provenanced on religion? In any event, the 1858 court case between Cracroft Wilson's Indian employees would not be Wuzerah's last experience in court or before the authorities.

The focus of the Quran (the basis of Islam and therefore Muslim communal identity) is monotheism as belief and worship; it was not really concerned (any more than any other religious text) to present a coherent intellectual impression of absolutely all moral values; an awareness of right and wrong is to some degree assumed or implied. The Quran contains no grand overview of the faith itself or anything as simple or pragmatic as the Ten Commandments. (Consequent generations had to rely on the *Hadith* – the reported statements and traditions of Muhammad – for a full comprehension of the Quran; the legal system that grew out of the Prophet Muhammad's administration came to freely borrow from pre-Islamic laws and customs, including those of subdued lands and peoples.) Furthermore the phenomena of swearing an oath raises some basic existential points. Strictly speaking taking an oath is discouraged or obviated in Islam, but if it needs to be taken then one should only take an oath 'by Allah'. The two main Quranic-Arabic terms relevant here are '*qasama*' (to swear an oath) and '*ahd*' (a solemn covenant or promise). Chapter three of the Quran, verse 77 warns: '*Those who purchase a small gain at the cost of Allah's covenant [bi-Adhi-Allahi] and their oaths, they have no portion in the Hereafter.*' Chapter 16, verse 91 reminds readers and listeners: '*Fulfil the covenant of Allah [bi-Adhi-Allahi] when you have covenanted, and break not your oaths.*' In a court case, when an oath or affirmation to tell the truth is compelled and a verbal undertaking suffices, there is no requirement to put the hand on a copy or *mus'haf* of the Holy Quran itself. Essentially it boils down to the faithfulness of the individual – if they are really Muslim then it follows that they are honest and won't lie (oath or no oath) but if they are corrupt then they will lie (again, oath or no oath). On the other hand there may be individuals who feel the weight of the verbalised oath itself and may feel more compelled by their conscience to tell the truth because an oath is indeed a very serious matter.

Case Study, Part Two: The Nabob and his employees

John Cracroft Wilson was no idle settler and his political activism earned him the local nickname of the 'Nabob' (an Anglo-Saxon corruption of the Urdu word *Nawab* which was itself a corruption of the more correct Arabic *naib* which means senior deputy).⁷⁶ His connections with India did not end with his relocation to New Zealand. During the 1860s Land wars with the Maori he publicly advocated the employment of Gurkhas and Indian soldiers, and in 1872 he was knighted (the Order of the Star of India) for his services to the British Empire.⁷⁷ This is not the place to explore all the details but evidently Cracroft Wilson had ongoing issues with his Indian employees in Cashmere (and ultimately his farming or socio-economic model, employing teams of Indian labourers, was never replicated elsewhere in New Zealand). Within months he was accusing his staff of larceny. Jailed in July 1859, Wuzerah was charged with unlawfully taking Cracroft Wilson's possessions for domestic purposes in the September court case.⁷⁸ Once again the original court papers are lost to us and we must rely on the *Lyttelton Times* which reported that the prisoner was a 'Hindoo' (sic) and a Mr. Philip Ashton was sworn in as interpreter. Sir John Cracroft Wilson stated that Wuzerah had been in his employ and was known to him for several years. He asserted that the Indian had stolen a copper boiler.⁷⁹ Fellow Indian employees Gunga Ram and Bhowanee Singh were brought in to testify. Singh, 'saw Mrs. Wilson give Wuzerah the boiler, saying – 'Your wife has a young child – take it home – heat water in it to bathe your child'.⁸⁰ However, ultimately the case went against Wuzerah and he was found guilty.⁸¹ (Gunga Ram and Bhowanee Singh are distinctly Hindu names). Wuzerah was not alone.

In 1861 four 'Mahometans' were identified in the nation-wide census⁸² and over 15 years later the 1878 census stated the presence of four Mahometans in the Selwyn area.⁸³ It is very

⁷⁶ See: 'John Cracroft Wilson', *Cyclopedia of New Zealand, Volume 3, Canterbury Part 1* (Christchurch: Horace J. Weeks, 1903), p.93; 'Wilson, Sir John Cracroft', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, ed. G. H. Scholefield (Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1940), pp.523-524; Douglas Cresswell, *Early New Zealand Families* (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1952), pp.115-120; Rona E. Tolmie, 'The political career of Sir John Cracroft Wilson', Unpublished Master's thesis (University of Canterbury, 1982); J.C. Wilson, ARC1989.50, Transcript of diary/recollections 1854 of Canterbury, 1-69, Transcript by Ron Chapman, Manuscript Collection, Canterbury Museum, (Christchurch, 1982); 'Wilson, John Cracroft', *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography 1769-1869* (Wellington: Allen and Unwin, 1990), pp.602-603; 'John Cracroft Wilson', *A Peoples History: Illustrated Biographies from the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume One, 1769-1869* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1992), pp.275-278.

⁷⁷ 'Obituary', *PR*, 4 March 1881, p. 3.

⁷⁸ 'Resident Magistrate's Court', *LT*, 9 July 1859, p. 5.

⁷⁹ 'Supreme Court', *LT*, 3 September 1859, p. 4.

⁸⁰ 'Supreme Court', *LT*, 3 September 1859, p. 4.

⁸¹ 'Lyttelton Record of Proceedings', August 1858-59, R22654934, CAHX, Series 2059, CH132, Box 637, Number 637, Archives New Zealand; also 'Lyttelton Criminal file - Regina v Wuzerah', R7899528, CAHX, Series 20326, CH251, Box 1, Number 1 & 2, Archives New Zealand.

⁸² *Statistics of New Zealand for 1861, including the results of a Census of the Colony, taken on the*

tempting to assume statistics refer to Wuzerah and his family in Cashmere. The eldest son, Pero Wuzerah, drowned in 1862. 'An inquest was held on the 3rd instant by Dr. Coward, on the body of Peero Wuzera, a boy of nine years of age, the son of one of the Mahometan natives of India employed by Mr. Cracroft Wilson. The boy slipped in crossing a foot-bridge over the Heathcote.'⁸⁴ It is uncertain where he was buried but most of the family seems to have ended their days in the Sydenham cemetery.

In 1873 Sir John Cracroft Wilson brought (and won) a civil case against 'Wuzeerah (Mahometan)' (sic) claiming 38 pounds.⁸⁵ In a general discussion about regional politics, society and the significance of paying for education, in October 1873 Cracroft Wilson explained to an assembled audience at the Canterbury Music Hall that 'a man in his employment, a Mahomedan' (sic) had approached him and 'said in Hindostanee (sic) that he would not pay for nothing and that he would therefore send his boys to school'.⁸⁶ This must have been Wuzerah and his three sons and suggests that until that point he had not been sending his children to the local school. It might also explain why Archives New Zealand holds a Recognizance of the Peace file under the name 'Wuzeera [Wuzeerah] (sic), 1874'.⁸⁷ In 1874 Wuzerah's youngest son got himself into legal trouble as well for laying stones on the railway lines. Interestingly the youth's name was given as 'Noer Khan (sic), alias Noorwa (sic), a little boy, the son of a Mahomedan' (sic) and Sir Cracroft Wilson acted as interpreter in the case.⁸⁸

The official census figures record 32 Muslims inside the entire Canterbury provincial district in March 1878, including four in the county of Selwyn and one more in Ashley (a very small settlement in north Canterbury). It is uncertain exactly who these people were, or indeed what happened to them all, although Wuzerah and family are obvious candidates. Most likely there were itinerant hawkers or sailors in port. Thereafter the figures fluctuate for the next 100 years, until a sizable group of permanent Muslim migrants settled in Christchurch in the 1970s.

Sir John Cracroft Wilson died in 1881 and apparently left Wuzerah and his eldest son a plot of land on the former estate, where the aging Indian spent the rest of his life (two decades) in a cottage on the corner of Cashmere and Valley roads. Apparently he had a team of bullocks

16th of December in that year (Auckland, 1861), Number 13.

⁸³ *Results of a Census of the Colony of New Zealand taken for the Night of the 3rd of March, 1878* (Wellington, 1880), pp. 254 & 256.

⁸⁴ 'Town and Country News', *LT*, 5 November 1862, p. 4.

⁸⁵ 'Magistrate's Court', *PR*, 8 May 1873, p. 3.

⁸⁶ 'Political Meeting', *ST*, 21 October 1873, p. 2.

⁸⁷ 'Canterbury Recognizance of the Peace File - Wuzeera [Wuzeerah]' R7898978, CAHX, Series 20324, CH251, Box 3 / Bundle J, Archives New Zealand.

⁸⁸ 'This Day', *ST*, 24 June 1874, p.2.

but usually used the same ones, named 'Baldy' and 'Smuggler'. He made monthly trips to Christchurch for necessities and would 'put up at the Rotherfield yard, near where the Gresham Hotel stood in Cashel Street.'⁸⁹ On one occasion, when asked why he always utilised the same pair, he informed the *Halswell Courier* in his best English: 'They quick go run it.'⁹⁰ Page one of the 11 December 1886 edition of *The Star* states that, on Wilderness Road 'Wuzerah and Mero, two Indian natives, were charged with illegally rescuing eighteen head of cattle from John Manship, ranger to the Halswell Road Board'.⁹¹ The Press newspaper identified the two men as 'Hindoos'.⁹²

One of his others sons, 'Wazera Noora' (he of stone and rail fame) was also involved in horse breeding and by the 1890s was selling trotting stallions in Otago.⁹³ This was no petty or obscure past-time on the margins of society or the economy. Belich reminds us that in the late nineteenth century: 'Breeding and feeding horses and bullocks were important industries, though they did not feature in export statistics.'⁹⁴ It must be said that while it constituted hard physical labour, operating a bullock team and dray was respectable semi-skilled work that 'represented substantial investments'.⁹⁵

Case Study, Part Three: Death and Legacy

Wuzerah died on 30 April 1902.⁹⁶ Curiously the Christchurch *Star* spelt his name 'Bezire'. He was described as a bullock driver, who, in the 1870s, brought stone for Christchurch Cathedral from a Port Hills quarry.⁹⁷ Might this work opportunity be regarded as an example of early interfaith activity? Certainly it may be a surprise to many to learn of the contribution of an early Muslim settler to the construction of perhaps New Zealand's most iconic symbol of Christian faith. Wuzerah's death, from heart disease, at the Cashmere property, with Mero finding the body, was reported in detail in the *Star* and, in more abbreviated form, in newspapers in other centres. An Indian Muslim living and dying in New Zealand was, clearly, a matter of some interest to the general public and the obituary was repeated, including the misspelling of his name, as far away as Auckland, Otago and Wanganui.⁹⁸ The Sydenham Cemetery burial book has Wuzerah listed as a 'pensioner' of the

⁸⁹ Gordon Ogilvie, *The Port Hills of Christchurch*, (Christchurch: Phillips & King Publishers, 2009), p. 238.

⁹⁰ Gordon Ogilvie, *The Port Hills of Christchurch*, p. 238.

⁹¹ 'Magisterial', *ST*, 9 December 1886, p. 3.

⁹² 'Magisterial', *PR*, 11 December 1886, p. 1.

⁹³ SEE: 'The Metropolitan Show', *PR*, 11 November 1893, p. 9; 'Advertisements' (Column Two), *ODT*, 24 November 1893, p. 4.

⁹⁴ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 355.

⁹⁵ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 382.

⁹⁶ 'Accidents and Fatalities', *PR*, 2 May 1902, p. 6.

⁹⁷ 'Personal', *ST*, 1 May 1902, p. 3.

⁹⁸ See: 'A Venerable Indian', *Auckland Star*, 2 May 1902, p. 5; 'Canterbury', *Otago Witness (OW)*, 7

Cracroft Wilson family and like the newspapers estimated his age at death as being anywhere between 80 to 100.

Wuzera's son Mero Wiggers died in 1927, aged 75, a labourer of Drain Road, Halswell. He was buried on 22 October in the Sydenham Cemetery. The 24 October 1927 Christchurch *Press* reads: 'The funeral of the late Mero Wizzero will leave 225 Durham Street on Tuesday at 10 a.m. for the Sydenham Cemetery.'⁹⁹ His brother Noah Wizer, a labourer of Hoon Hay, was buried on 25 September 1928 in the same plot, and was likewise reported in the 26 September 1928 *Press* states.¹⁰⁰ The grave is unmarked. Cashmere-Christchurch born Rabbi, also known as Robert Wazero, worked as a farm labourer and lived on Cashmere Road. He died, aged 79, on 21 March 1941 and was also buried in at the Sydenham Cemetery.¹⁰¹ As far as we know none of Wuzerah's sons had families. Vandals wrecked the modest memorial to Wuzerah and a fellow Indian servant named Kulloo. In the 2000s the Cracroft Community Centre restored it. (Kulloo was a known bachelor, not Muslim and did not have descendants.) A public appeal was made for descendants of the servants to help in the restoration but there was no response.¹⁰²

It may be useful to briefly contrast the experiences of Wuzerah with that of Kulloo, one of the few other identifiable Indian servants of Sir John Cracroft Wilson.¹⁰³ In 1872 Kulloo was alleged to have attempted suicide and brought before the courts. The Christchurch *Press* simply describe him in two articles as 'a man of color' and no reference is made to his religious affiliations (or lack thereof). Neither is a full name given or solicited.¹⁰⁴ Kulloo also died in 1902 at Cashmere and was buried beside Wuzerah at Sydenham.¹⁰⁵ At a later stage a memorial plaque has been placed on their graves, presumably by someone from the Cracroft Wilson family or estate, and this serves to remind us that they were respected members of the wider Canterbury community.

Reviewing the evidence, one is struck by the overpowering sense of isolation this Indian Muslim family experienced inside the British colony and one can only assume they possessed a great deal of personal stamina. They certainly demonstrated a lot of character. Then again, Wuzerah may have disliked the sectarian tensions, communal or caste violence

May 1902, p. 30; 'Accidents and Fatalities', *WH*, 2 May 1902, p. 2.

⁹⁹ *PR*, 24 October 1927, p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ *PR*, 26 September 1928, p. 17.

¹⁰¹ 'Wazero, Robert - Christchurch - Retired Farm Lab' R20190161, CAHX, Series 2989, CH17, Box 387, Number CH1235/1941, Archives New Zealand.

¹⁰² Rosa Shiels, 'Indians of Cashmere', *PR*, 18 July 2009, p.D9.

¹⁰³ Kulloo is unlikely to be a real name. 'Kulloo' is a nickname derived from the Hindi word 'kala' for black. Hence 'Kulloo' literally means Blackie or Darkie in vernacular Hindi. It could be that his real name was Kalam (literally 'speech' or 'eloquence' in Arabic, and thus Muslim) or Kailash (Hindi or Sanskrit for 'crystal', and thence Hindu), but this pure speculation.

¹⁰⁴ 'Magistrates' Courts', *PR*, 21 March 1872, p. 3; 'Magistrates' Courts', *PR*, 22 March 1872, p. 3.

¹⁰⁵ 'News of the Day', *PR* 22 August 1902, p.4.

and Indian politics he left behind forever. He may very well have made numerous good friends in the *Communitas* of early colonial Canterbury society and found it simply preferable to his own native milieu. The Canterbury colony must have been, basically, populated by a peculiar kind of English diaspora and Wuzerah's presence simply reinforced notions that the land and people were connected to the British Empire. (In that sense Wuzerah was no more or less alien to the country than most of his contemporaries.) When an 'Indian Relief Fund' was initiated following the Sepoy mutiny of 1857, 'Wuzeerah (a Mahommedan)' and his five shilling donation, was listed alongside all the other Anglo-Saxon contributors (without their denominations signified).¹⁰⁶ It should also be remembered that Canterbury gained a large British-European population majority early on and was governed by a staunchly autonomistic provincial council until 1876; in many respects group loyalty was orientated towards the local and parochial leadership and the region rather than any vague notion of a proto-national identity. Robin Cohen summarises the point well and discussing migration he captures the environment of the Canterbury colony in the mid to late nineteenth century:

Diasporas are in a continuous state of formation and reformation. Their situation can change, often dramatically, in response to tumultuous events and more subtle changes in religious epicentres, homelands and host lands.¹⁰⁷

Most of Sir Cracroft Wilson's Indian servants are known to have Left Canterbury and most likely returned to India. Those who remained in New Zealand are understood to have taken British or Pakeha wives and were involved with (and so one presumes, converted to) various Christian churches.¹⁰⁸ We have no firm evidence, beyond swearing in at court appearances, of the religious sentiments or practices of Wuzerah and his family.

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to offer a general outline of the first decades of Muslim immigration by focusing on the societal framework and the available biographical material. This demonstrates that so far as can be determined (and apart from Wuzerah and his sons) these individuals were unconnected to each other. There is no evidence that they were particularly devout or pious, that they sought each other out as fellow Muslims, or that they ever prayed together. Conversely there is no evidence that these early Muslim settlers didn't attend to their prayers and faith in private, away from the public gaze.

¹⁰⁶ 'Indian Relief Fund', *LT*, 8 May 1858, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Robin Cohen, *Global Diasporas - An Introduction*, (London & New York: Routledge, Second edition, 2008), p. 141.

¹⁰⁸ Rosa Shiels, 'Indians of Cashmere', *PR*, 18 July 2009, p.D9.

To recapitulate the main points here, Empire and human migration across the world over the preceding 200 years constituted perhaps the most significant catalysts of socio-religious transformations in our era – possibly in all human experience.¹⁰⁹ Belich summarized it thus: ‘In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Europe exploded outward in one of the most phenomenal expansions in human history.’¹¹⁰ He then goes on to discuss the critical idea of cultural ‘ricochets’ between cross-cultural comprehensions¹¹¹ It should be adequate to point out that folk in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas have all been affected or influenced in a dazzling myriad of differentiated forms, either as the colonisers or the colonised, subjects or citizens. This is not the place to judge motives or apportion culpabilities, or explore critical junctions in socio-economic interaction, or indeed to discuss the British Empire at all, but it is relevant that the first Muslim family came to New Zealand directly as part of the British imperial project of colonisation. Personal history is of course informed by distinct ideas and concepts of the past and ultimately the Empire of Albion is clearly one of a myriad of components that fostered a utilitarian and reciprocated atmosphere of a largely forgotten cultural hybridisation present in early New Zealand. For example, one contemporary newspaper in 1878 proudly described ‘England, as the greatest Mohametan power in the world....’¹¹² and by the end of the century Queen Victoria had employed her own personal Indian *Munshi* (secretary) to teach her Urdu at Balmoral.¹¹³ Ultimately, though, we should also bear in mind this was an era when the very word ‘Mohametan’ or ‘Mahometan’ (or variants thereof) could be used in a pejorative sense.¹¹⁴ The subsequent diversity of cultural heritage here cannot be overstated and it should come as no surprise that so many Indian Muslims settled in New Zealand.

This modern *Völkerwanderung* has constituted an unparalleled intellectual and social conundrum, and has necessitated fresh ideas and new conceptualisations for various generations of migrants and natives. Edward Said once wrote that: ‘Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another: none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated and unmonolithic.’¹¹⁵

How exactly (or indeed if) Wuzerah and his family members conceptualised their role in this exciting and novel cultural drama is impossible to gauge and one might well ask whether

¹⁰⁹ Over 50 million people left Europe between 1815 and 1930: Dudley Baines, *Emigration from Europe 1815-1930* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 1.

¹¹⁰ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 124.

¹¹¹ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, p. 115.

¹¹² ‘Passing Notes’, *ODT*, 10 April 1878, p. 2.

¹¹³ Shrabani Basu, *Victoria and Abdul: The True Story of the Queen's Closest Confidant*, (Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2010).

¹¹⁴ SEE: ‘Supreme Court’, *Wellington Independent*, 10 September 1861, p. 5.: ‘Higgie called him a w___r and a Mahometan.’

¹¹⁵ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (London: Vintage, 1994), page xxix.

Islam served to guide or bewilder these Muslim forerunners. Adapting to life in New Zealand was seldom quick or easy for Anglo-European settlers in this period – let alone isolated Asian Muslims. Everything must have been deeply and disturbingly unfamiliar. It is no wonder Wuzerah seems to have spent his entire life on or near the comparatively familiar property of his employee Sir Cracroft Wilson in Cashmere. This was a complex, evolving relationship. On one occasion Cracroft Wilson instituted legal proceedings against Wuzerah for larceny, but later left provision for Wuzerah and his family in his Will. The absence of any evidence at all for religion or religious practices is in itself revealing. People use art and architecture to crystalize their deepest aspirations and emotions publicly, not to mention their comprehension of their temporary place in an eternal world. Either the family were not overly pious or they kept this aspect of their domestic affairs extremely private. Perhaps paradoxically, human experience reveals that perceived or imaginary differences between folk of different races and faiths are often more axiomatic than real ones.

Theoretically, Islam dictates a degree of theocracy: God alone is the supreme sovereign ruler and is thus the only real law-giver, and the Prophet Muhammad was the agent by whom Muslims were alerted to the holy ordinances and the Quran explicitly or implicitly detailed these for the edification of the faithful. The significance of the *Sunnah* and the issue of correctly following it, cannot be understated. However it needs to be noted that even as isolated from other Muslim migrants as they were (and often of differing ethnicities), these characters all – or mostly – seem to have possessed some vague notions of their distinctive ‘Mahometan’ identity without clearly articulating it specifically for future generations to ponder over. How exactly did individuals negotiate multiple identity commitments? New Zealand? Indian? Muslim? The first step towards knowledge of one’s self and one’s own culture is recognition of one’s membership and participation within a historically defined and evolving community. In the absence of personal testimonies or diaries and so forth, it is difficult to comprehend the precise measure and nature of Islamic religiosity of these individuals.

It seems fair to conclude that many of these early Muslim forerunners, lacking access to Islamic institutions and associated spiritual leadership or guidance, largely assimilated into the societal environment around them as best they could, without overly worrying about either the *Sunnah* (the customs and words of the Prophet) or the Shariah (Islamic law). Presumably they were guided more by economic or possibly social imperatives rather any theological precepts. There must have been plenty of new obstacles, one imagines, without proper informed scientific aid or some kind of educational background in the subject, it would have been nearly impossible for these Muslim settlers to determine the exact Islamic calendar dates for Eid or Ramadan merely by gazing at the layout of the crystalline

constellation of the stars now they were resident in the Southern Hemisphere. The need to foster a personal, conscious and conscientious, private spirituality based – theoretically – solely on the Quran must have raised all sorts of existential quandaries that we can only guess at.

Erich Kolig reminds us that ‘a genuine New Zealand identity is still much in flux.’¹¹⁶ The fact remains that for most New Zealanders Islam remains a quintessentially foreign and alien religion, new to these shores and incomprehensibly exotic. It is worth re-examining the curious example of the practice in an English court of law of a Muslim holding a Quran in his or her right hand when swearing by Allah to tell the truth - this is not part of the *Sunnah*, nor is it a requirement of the Shari’a. Nor is it part of any historic British legal tradition. It is most probably a practice which has been introduced by, or in imitation of, the English judicial system – based on the earlier, long-established practice of Christians of holding in their right hand a copy of the Bible when swearing by God to tell the truth. We have noted holding a Quran or referring to the Quran when swearing an oath is not necessary, however it would probably be fair to say that for many slightly bewildered or uneducated Muslims, holding a copy of the Quran when swearing an oath by Allah is an outward demonstration to those who are present that they are indeed Muslims and intend by this action to emphasise that their oath is a sincere and solemn one. In many respects then, from a very early stage, Muslim individuals in New Zealand have consistently reflected the social values and more around them.

¹¹⁶ Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism* (2009), p. 140.

CHAPTER THREE

Integration and Interaction on the Margins: Muslims in the South Island in the Early Twentieth Century

Introduction

Continuing from the last chapter, the aim of this chapter is to outline the origins and early development of the Muslim population in the South Island, whose life stories illustrate a range of themes. As Pratt has pointed out in *The Challenge of Islam*: ‘Personal Islamic identity is bound up with communal identity, which is itself located and contextualised within the bounds of time and space.’¹¹⁷ In order to outline and flesh out the realities of Muslim life in this period this chapter is divided into four sections mostly outlining significant biographies of identifiable Muslim individuals and families in the early to mid-twentieth century. The first section will examine a Punjabi businessman who initially set up shop in Akaroa during the late 1900s before relocating to Christchurch and then the Chatham Islands, where he died; his biography is colourful, demonstrates a few minor discrepancies in the historical data and illustrates well the curious position of prominent Indian Muslim shopkeepers in this period. I will follow this by exploring the life of a Turkmenistani father and son who also settled in Christchurch and were involved in business; in fact the son became a very prominent and popular ice cream vendor at Cathedral Square, recognised by Pakeha and other, mainly Anglo-European settlers as an important part of the social landscape. I will then study some of the more minor low-key Muslim characters who lived in Canterbury, the grandson of one going on to play an important role in the creation of the local Muslim Association decades later. Towards the end I will investigate the ambiguity of cultural identity as evidenced in a high profile Macedonian Muslim refugee turned businessman in Dunedin who publicly and repeatedly claimed he was Turkish. These narratives neatly illustrate the diversity of Muslim experience, ethnicity and manifestation of faith and religious practices (or lack thereof). They demonstrate that there were more Muslim individuals functioning in New Zealand society than hitherto noted or appreciated. This chapter will conclude with a reiteration of my main findings here, namely that the historical evidence shows that the Muslim men who arrived appear to have had very little or no contact with each other.

¹¹⁷ Douglas Pratt, *The Challenge Of Islam: Encounters in Interfaith Dialogue* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p. 137.

Overview

Although the available sources about the exact movement, the precise employment and detailed settlement of all early Muslim forerunners are hopelessly nebulous, one penultimate preliminary observation seems pertinent here. It is obvious that the immigration of Muslims was concomitant with British colonisation and settlement in New Zealand. One recalls the words of the English historian Sir John Seeley that Britain ‘conquered half the world in a fit of absence of mind and peopled it in a mood of lazy indifference.’¹¹⁸ Muslims came and settled here as an indirect result of a more direct and deliberate policy to encourage British settlers such as Cracroft. Two key questions then arise. Were there other, similar but less reported, Muslim employees entering and settling in the colony? How did Muslim spiritual autonomy or communal identity survive the migration experience? John Stenhouse makes the intriguing observation of this period:

Between the 1830s and the 1930s, religious and secular traditions transplanted from earlier times and distant places operated as lively centrifugal forces, galvanising ferment, friction and fractiousness in a society that was never homogenous.¹¹⁹

A partial answer can be found in occasional references to ‘Mahometan’ manservants, coolies and sailors from time to time in newspapers and court records. Despite the brevity of available reports and primary data, and the important and popular fact that some only stayed in New Zealand for short periods of time, I believe it is worth taking the time to analyse and review some of these early visitors and forerunners. These early Muslim settlers laid the foundations for subsequent developments and their lives inform us a great deal about contemporary attitudes of the ‘unmarked’ majority towards Muslims and Islam.¹²⁰ Whilst we must acknowledge that it is impossible to trace their intentions with any surgical precision, we can contemplate the broader impression inflected by primary material (such as newspaper accounts for example). The material on their presence and activities reveals a great deal about the environment in which they were working and functioning - the prevalent paradigmatic mood of the era, people or location, and the prejudices and the respect - they were exposed to or enjoyed. This in turn gives us clues or markers about how Islam developed afterwards.

Finally, it is worth recalling that all Muslim immigrants examined here undertook their

¹¹⁸ Sir John Seeley, *The Expansion of England* (London: Macmillan, 1883), p. 10.

¹¹⁹ John Stenhouse, ‘Religion and Society’, *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 329.

¹²⁰ See: Mike Goldsmith’s fine essay in Rosalind McClean et al, eds *Counting Stories, Moving Ethnicities* (Hamilton: University of Waikato, 2012), pp. 63-64.

formative education in lands substantially different to the Anglo-European settlers. They brought fundamentally alien (and sometimes conflicting) views, traditions and stereotypes that mainstream British, Pakeha and Maori societies in colonial (and post-colonial) New Zealand were unfamiliar with. The British scholar Gibb wrote: ‘The history of Islam in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is a history of revival and efforts at readjustment under the double stimulus of challenge from within and pressing dangers from without.’¹²¹ This chapter will elucidate how individual Muslim immigrants coped with these challenges and pressures, and how they adapted and negotiated their own spaces within that society.

Sheikh Mohammed Din

Perhaps the earliest identifiable Punjabi Muslim settler in the South Island was Sheikh Mohammed Din from Sialkote, born in 1877 to Fazal Din, a farmer and merchant.¹²² In 1904 W. T. Glasgow, Secretary and Inspector at the Customs Department in Wellington gave Sheikh Mahommed Din permission to enter the colony, provided a Mr. Devereux gave a written guarantee that Din would leave with Mrs Kempthorne within one month of his arrival.¹²³ He did not. Within months of his arrival he was the store manager of Pannells Ltd on Lavoud Street in Akaroa and by the end of that same year he was married and for all intents and purposes, settled. The shop sold clothes, linen, boots and hats, but it seems Din spent a lot of time at the Criterion Hotel – his first appearance in the newspapers was in 1904 when ‘a sporting dog, belonging to Mr Din, bit one of [the Criterion Hotel proprietor] Mr Hill’s little girls on the cheek. The wound was so serious that it required three stitches.’¹²⁴ This incident did not stop him marrying one of Mr Hill’s daughters later that month. In fact the *Akaroa Mail* contains an entirely positive account of his marriage at St Peters (Anglican) Church on 15 September 1904 to Gertrude Esther Hill, a 20 year old spinster from Rangiora and eldest daughter of A. W. Hill, proprietor of Criterion Hotel in Akaroa. Din’s employer Mr L. Pannell was Best Man. The newspaper gushed effusively about the bride’s ‘beautiful dress of crepe de Chene, trimmed with medallions of lace and satin ribbon’ and the lace and various jewellery on display.¹²⁵ However, despite the ostentatious gifts the marriage did not last - the couple separated and by March 1905 Hill was filing for divorce. ‘Application for a Separation Order on Ground of Persistent Cruelty’ reads a headline underneath ‘Stipendiary Magistrate’s Court’ in the *Akaroa Mail* on 3 March 1905:

¹²¹ Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 113.

¹²² ‘Register of Marriage’, District of Akaroa, Ref. Number [CH208/0353/1909], Archives New Zealand.

¹²³ ‘W T Glasgow, Secretary and Inspector, Customs Department, Wellington - Sheik Mahomet’ R16232895, BBAO, Series 5544, A78, Box 215 / a, Number 1904 / 1242, Archives New Zealand.; I have been unable to ascertain who Mr Devereux was.

¹²⁴ ‘Local and General’, *Akaroa Mail and Banks Peninsula Advertiser (AMB)*, 6 September 1904, p. 2.

¹²⁵ See: ‘Wedding’, *AMB*, 16 September 1904, p. 2; and ‘Marriage’, *AMB*, 20 September 1904, p. 2.

In October he began to ill treat me by striking me across the cheek and trying to choke me. He struck me one morning and choked me in the evening, and I left home and went back to my parents. I was much bruised about the neck and shoulders, but we made it up. He promised to be good to me, and I came back to him after two days. After my return he often treated me cruelly... He said he had been unfaithful with another man's wife, and told me to be unfaithful with other men. He told me he was going home to India. He has threatened to murder me many times.¹²⁶

This did not keep Din out of the Criterion Hotel and in 1907 he got into trouble with clientele. On 21 June 1907 he was involved in a fracas with one Archibald Knaw in the billiard-room in a dispute about a bet.¹²⁷ With contradictory testimony from eye witnesses, the case was dismissed.

Sheikh Mohammed Din and Gertrude Hill were divorced (by Decree Nisi) in September 1909.¹²⁸ However Din remarried the following year, to a nineteen-year old named Madeline Elizabeth Olsen. Whilst Sheikh Mohammed would use his surname 'Din' his entire life, the children were all given an Anglicised version of his surname. Their first child, a girl named Zohra Elizabeth Dean, was born in 1911, and their only son, Lawrence Edward Dean, in 1912. Newspaper evidence suggests there were two further daughters named Myra Gladys and Onyx or Onex Miriam Dean.¹²⁹ Sheikh Mohammed Din's death certificate in 1945 indicated he was survived by one son and four daughters.¹³⁰

In his commercial dealings it seems Din had trouble with customers failing to pay their bills and there was a series of court cases involving recalcitrant debtors, and his efforts to keep the business afloat. Throughout 1905 Din was in the courts regularly – often pursuing unpaid debts of clients and customers on credit failing to pay 'accounts owing'.¹³¹ In September 1907 Din was charged with breach of the Factories Act by the Inspector of Factories (no

¹²⁶ 'Stipendiary Magistrate's Court', *AMB*, 3 March 1905, p. 2.

¹²⁷ 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 5 July 1907, p. 2.

¹²⁸ See: 'Din, Mohamad v Din, Gertie Esther' R20357627, CAHX, Series 3007, CH208, Box 19, Number D353 / 1908, Archives New Zealand; and 'Din, Mohamad v Din, Gertie Esther' R20357678, CAHX, Series 3007, CH208, Box 21, Number D405 / 1909, Archives New Zealand.

¹²⁹ See: 'Ready to Sail', *AS*, 1 October 1935, p. 9; 'Din Trial', *AS*, 24 October 1935, p. 8.

¹³⁰ Births, Deaths & Marriages, Central Registry, District of Chatham Islands, Folio number 1945/3711 Ref number 5-0123752.

¹³¹ See: 'Civil Cases', *AMB*, 7 April 1905, p. 3.; 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 6 August 1909, p. 2; 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 8 October 1909, p. 2; 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 7 January 1910, p. 2; 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 8 April 1910, p. 2.

less) and fined five shillings and costs seven shillings.¹³² At the same time he was being prosecuted, M. Din took over direct ownership of the shop from Pannells: 'I beg to notify to the inhabitants of Akaroa and Banks Peninsula generally that I have purchased the business of Pannells' Ltd, Akaroa.'¹³³ Within six months Din was back in court when 'J.W. Munro sued M. Din for not paying his wages.'¹³⁴ Later in the same year 'M. Din was charged with keeping his business place in Lavaud Street open for business on a Sunday.'¹³⁵ By September 1909 Din had taken to retrieving property in an effort to recuperate his losses. 'M Din had seized two horses and a dog cart under a bill of sale... Mr Din stated that he was much dissatisfied over this case. He would willingly pay £20 for the two horses and the cart.'¹³⁶

By 30 June 1911 the *Akaroa Mail* was advising the reading public in uppercase, bold capital letters: 'Mr R. Latter has received instructions from Mrs. S.M. Din, who is leaving Akaroa, to sell by public auction, at her residence, Balguerie Street, Akaroa.'¹³⁷ The auctioneer went on to list the household property including a surprising number of 'Ladies Gold watches, Brooches, Rings, and Gent's Gold and Silver Watches.'¹³⁸ A month later on 6 July 1911 'Mohamid Din, of Christchurch, Storekeeper' filed for bankruptcy.¹³⁹ He owed £383:15:11 immediately to the liquidators of Pannells Ltd. His liabilities were £495:11:3 and assets - Nil.¹⁴⁰ In tracking down unpaid debts, one court case revealed Din's personal religious sentiments:

Sheikh Mahommed Din....on entering the witness box, had an oath administered to him in the usual way and kissed the Bible. The Magistrate (Mr H. W. Bishop) asked him of what faith he was, and he replied 'Mahomedan.' The Magistrate then expressed doubts as to whether an oath sworn on the Christian Bible would be regarded as binding by witness....Witness assured the Magistrate that such an oath was binding on him. On being asked if the Koran was not his sacred book, he replied that the Bible was very near the Koran, and there was a lot that was exactly

¹³² 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 13 September 1907, p. 2.

¹³³ 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 13 September 1907, p. 1.

¹³⁴ 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 3 April 1908, p. 1.

¹³⁵ 'S.M. Court', *AMB*, 7 August 1908, p. 2.

¹³⁶ 'S.M. COURT', *AMB*, 3 September 1909, p. 2.

¹³⁷ 'Mrs Din's Sale', *AMB*, 30 June 1911, p. 2.

¹³⁸ 'R. Latter', *AMB*, 30 June 1911, p. 3.

¹³⁹ 'Official Assignee's Bankruptcy files - Christchurch - Din Mahommid (sic) - 06.07.1911'

R19783817 CAMO, CH214, Box 25, Number 675, Archives New Zealand.; 'A petition in bankruptcy has been filed by Mohammed Din, storekeeper, Christchurch. The first meeting of creditors will be held on Thursday at 11 a.m.' 'News of the Day', *The Press (PR)*, 11 July 1911, p. 6; 'News of the Day', *PR*, 14 July 1911, p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ 'News of the Day', *PR*, 14 July 1911, p. 6.

the same in both.¹⁴¹

Once again we see a measure of sympathy for the individual Muslim witness in court that is at odds with the public legislation against Asian immigration. This issue raises questions about the true depth of anti-Asian sentiment during this time period. The authorities may have wanted to hold back the entry of large numbers of Asian migrants but they also treated individual Asians with some respect and dignity.

In December 1911 Din appeared before the courts for assaulting his mother-in-law. 'Both parties gave evidence at great speed and considerable length.' The Judge dismissed the case.¹⁴² Following his bankruptcy Sheikh Mohammed Din moved to Manchester Street in Christchurch. He was granted a court discharge from this status over a decade later on 6 September 1922. In late 1913 'Sheikh Mohammed Din, a well-known figure in the Christchurch streets' was involved in what can only be politely described as a very public altercation between his wife and a police constable named Smyth, whilst under the influence of liquor. At the police station it was revealed that he had concealed a revolver.¹⁴³ Over a decade later in 1926 'Sheik Mahomet Din, a native of India, aged 46 years, Christchurch, admitted having been found drunk in Cashel street on Friday' refused to leave the Rotherfield Hotel when requested. He was convicted and fined.¹⁴⁴ Alcohol is forbidden in Islam.¹⁴⁵ Yet Din, like many Muslims before and after, have taken the opportunity of life in New Zealand to partake of the bottle. Clearly Muslim immigrants and settlers drew their own conclusions based on their own education and comprehension of the faith, their own values priorities, and their own experiences.

By 1913 Din was operating a jewellery business on Manchester Street in Christchurch. It seems he would hawk his wares across the countryside, not always profitably. In a November 1913 court case two thieves – William Charles Merrett and Sydney William Arthur – were prosecuted for stealing 'one bag of jewellery, valued at £500, the property of S. M. Din.'¹⁴⁶ His trade and income is hard to define accurately during this time. The 1918 *Wise's Post Office Trade Directory* list him as a 'jeweller' on Antigua Street¹⁴⁷ whilst the

¹⁴¹ 'News of the Day', *PR*, 6 October 1911, p. 6.

¹⁴² 'Magistrate's Court', *PR*, 21 December 1911, p. 3.

¹⁴³ 'Resisted Arrest', *PR*, 20 October 1913, p. 4.

¹⁴⁴ 'The Courts', *PR*, 15 February 1926, p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ Gibb, H.A.R., *Mohammedanism*, p.46; Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in Focus* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1975), p.42; Yusuf Al Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (Al-Halal Wal Haram Fil Islam)*, (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1960), pp.69-70; See also: Quran 2:219, 4:43 & 5:93-94.

¹⁴⁶ 'Alleged Theft', *PR*, 6 November 1913, p. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Sheik Mahmt. Din, *Wise's Post Office Trade Directory* (H. Wise & Co., Dunedin, 1918), p. 1268.

Electoral Rolls record him as a 'labourer' on Leeds Street¹⁴⁸.

The year 1922 was not a good one for Din. In June he got into legal trouble for failing to pay rent. 'Annie Ford proceeded against Sheik Mahomet Din for the possession of a tenement in Proctor street, Papanui.' He was ordered to give up possession on or before 24 July and pay over 4 pounds in overdue rent.¹⁴⁹ A month after, In October 1922, he was discharged as Bankrupt in the Supreme Court of New Zealand, his wife separated from him. In 1940 they were formally divorced.¹⁵⁰ However the details of the marriage, separation and various legal proceedings were widely reported in the newspapers. In 1923 the *NZ Truth* raged hysterically:

The fallacy of mixed marriages and the ultimate sorrows that crowd the subsequent life of white women who fall for the wily love intrigues of colored (sic) suitors was well exemplified in a case heard in the Christchurch Magistrate's Court last week. Quite an attractive-looking woman, still on the sunny side of life, but showing the unmistakable signs of fear and dejection, told the Magistrate Wyvern Wilson a pitiable tale of her experiences following on her matrimonial union with a specimen of the Indian race, who styled himself Sheik Mahomet Din. He apparently was one of those FAKIRS FROM THE EAST claiming supernatural powers who so infatuated the charming Madeline, still then in her teens, and held her as his domestic drudge for years, until the unfortunate woman, through abject fear, had to seek the protection of the Court to save her from even a worse peril than being the lawful wife of an alien colored man.¹⁵¹

The *NZ Truth* transcript provides a bizarrely long discussion in the court about Din's title of 'Sheikh'. This was followed by details of his threats of violence with carving knives and his 'extraordinary spiritual powers' over Mrs Din. She went on to explain that he was employed by the City Council for £3 a week and that she planned to relocate to Auckland. Interestingly the *Press* was equally detailed but took a more humorous view of the episode. Her lawyer, Mr L. W. Gee, was quoted saying:

Din was an alien, who believed he had supernatural powers to break orders of the

¹⁴⁸ 1922 Electoral District of Christchurch East – Supplementary Roll, (Lyttelton Times Co. Ltd. Christchurch), October 1922, p.11.

¹⁴⁹ 'Civil Business', *PR*, 23 June 1922, p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ 'DIN Sheikh Mahamad - Madeline Elizabeth' R6699791, BBAE, Series 4985, A48, Box 575, Number D237/1940, Archives New Zealand.

¹⁵¹ 'Mixed Marriage Muddle', *NZ Truth (NZT)*, 28 July 1923, p. 5.

Court. The Magistrate: He seems to have supernatural powers to get her back. I am wondering whether it is much good making an order, as she always goes back to him.¹⁵²

The *Press* reported that Mr Gee went on to explain that Din 'is a follower of the Prophet.'¹⁵³ Presumably the lawyer was referring to the Prophet Muhammad and not Wiremu Ratana (1873 – 1939) or Te Kooti (1832–1893). Certainly the newspaper saw no need to elucidate the remark.¹⁵⁴

Din first came to the Chatham Islands in November 1923. Apparently he took a suitcase of cloth suit samples and samples of dress materials, and his new business venture involved selling made-to-measure suits and dress material.¹⁵⁵ In 1924 Din built a store at Owenga - a small fishing settlement of 200 people - where he stocked groceries and clothes. In 1930 he bought a section on Maipito Road and had another shop built so he could operate a business in Waitangi as well. He brought men over from Christchurch to help run the businesses.¹⁵⁶

In chapter two of *The People of the Chathams, True Tales of the islanders Early Days* Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson provides us with a fascinating glimpse of Din's personality in later years and some measure of religiosity and personal intimacy not apparent in the mainstream newspaper accounts. Declared 'one of the best known Chatham Island characters for 20 years' Din allegedly had a price on his wares for every customer. The poorer shoppers received inferior goods for lower prices whilst higher prices secured quality.

As a Moslem, he abhorred any food or article that came from a pig, and was a sitting duck for the many tricks played on him by the locals for his beliefs. Pero Dix once came into his shop...[and] brought from under his coat a large meaty hambone which he flourished in Din's face. Din became very excitable, waving his arms and shouting and cursing at Pero for this sacrilege - which distracted his attention from the other three busily stuffing goods under their clothes in a shoplifting spree.¹⁵⁷

On another occasion another local convinced Din that a riding saddle he stocked was made

¹⁵² 'The Courts', *PR*, 18 July 1923, p. 7.

¹⁵³ 'The Courts', *PR*, 18 July 1923, p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ See also: 'The Doings of Din', *NZT*, 24 November 1923, p.6.

¹⁵⁵ David Holmes, 'S M Din - 25 Years Storekeeper on the Chatham Islands', *Chatham Islands News & Views* (August 1987), unpaginated.

¹⁵⁶ Holmes, 'S M Din - 25 Years Storekeeper on the Chatham Islands', *Chatham Islands News & Views*.

¹⁵⁷ Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders Early Days* (Martinborough: GWJ Publications, 1994), unpaginated.

of pig leather and persuaded the storekeeper to sell it at a bargain price. Evidently the Indian shopkeeper was also familiar with some kind of faith healing and local folk would consult him.

In the early 1930s, Te Huia Hough once suffered from agonising toothache....Sitting her on a chair, he drew a large square on the floor and divided that into several squares, in each of which he drew certain characters. He then began a strange dance, ending each set with a great leap and unearthly yell, when he would erase one of the characters with his foot. When all the characters were erased, and he had finished his dance and incantations, Te Huia's toothache was completely gone.¹⁵⁸

In 1935 his ex-wife and son were involved in a widely reported court case for bank fraud. Mrs Din also testified that Sheikh Mohammed Din regularly sent her money.¹⁵⁹ At some point in the late 1930s his wife 'a Norwegian woman with a domineering disposition and his four daughters, Onyx, Myra, Bebe and Zora' arrived on the Chatham Islands together with the son Laurence to join Din. Evidently the progeny were especially disruptive, conflicting with neighbours and other islanders in general.¹⁶⁰ For example the son schemed with his mother to have a faked telegram sent – purportedly from Din's lawyer Goldstein in Christchurch and presumably regarding his old court case. The police were alerted, the pair charged and fined three pounds.¹⁶¹

On 12 July 1945 the body of storekeeper Sheikh Mohammed Din was found (drowned) in the Nairn River at Waitangi in the Chatham Islands.¹⁶² 'Hina Hough immediately voiced her opinion that Laurence had murdered his father, but this could not be substantiated'.¹⁶³ Evidently the son Laurence ordered a coffin suitable to transport the corpse to Mecca, however ultimately both were transported to the Bromley Crematorium in Christchurch and for reasons that are not entirely clear (although presumably economics were involved) cremated on 24 July 1945. Islam forbids cremation and transporting bodies over distances is generally frowned upon. Theoretically the corpse is supposed to be buried immediately, within 24 hours if possible. Instead, inexplicably, his ashes were interred at the Waikumete

¹⁵⁸ Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders Early Days*.

¹⁵⁹ 'Auckland Bank Case', *The Evening Post (EP)*, 2 October 1935, p. 12; 'Dins on Trial', AS, 25 October 1935, p. 8.

¹⁶⁰ Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders Early Days*.

¹⁶¹ Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders Early Days*.

¹⁶² 'DIN Sheikh Mohammad' R23140348, AAOM, Series 6030, Box 183, 17231, Archives New Zealand.

¹⁶³ Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders Early Days*.

cemetery in Auckland in 1948. His death certificate lists his widow as a 52 year old Madeline Elizabeth Olsen and identifies one son and four daughters.¹⁶⁴ Olsen and her progeny apparently returned to run Din's shop but their 'scandalous and violent behaviour' led the authorities to 'persuade them to leave the island'. The son Laurence stayed to wind up the business but the store mysteriously burnt down in 1947.¹⁶⁵

Johnson notes: 'It had always been Din's dearest ambition to visit Mecca in his lifetime, so his last wish was to have his ashes taken there.'¹⁶⁶ This is an intriguing observation. Did Din really articulate a desire to perform the Hajj (as all Muslims who can afford to do so) to non-Muslim folk on Chatham Islands? It is a potentially useful insight into either how much he articulated his religious beliefs whilst on the island or how much the islanders understood and recalled his faith decades later.

Din has been effaced, essentially, from canonical accounts of Muslims in New Zealand – largely, it seems, because so few have ever heard of him (perhaps ironically in view of the plethora of well publicised court cases), or perhaps because his biography reads like a Ronald Hugh Morrieson novel and hardly seems possible. Maybe Din did not demonstrate enough interest in other Muslims resident in New Zealand at the time. Nor did he establish fame and reputation for his practice of the faith, although Chatham Islanders believe he prayed every day and followed halal dietary rules. This is unfortunate because, firstly, Din is an extremely interesting character in his own right. Secondly he demonstrates the other end of the spectrum of Muslim immigration – that of almost total integration into the prevailing culture and society, and that does deserve more attention.

Ice Cream Charlie

Another colourful character links the previous case study with the current one. According to his descendants, Sali (or more probably Saleh) Mahomet was born Mohammed Khan in Ashkabad, Turkmenistan. The family fled the Russian invasion in the nineteenth century but the women folk died crossing Afghanistan into British India. Father and son, Sultan and Sali, found their way to Australia and then Dunedin in 1894. They traded as hawkers throughout Otago and the West Coast before settling in Christchurch in 1903 after Sali injured a leg. Sultan Mahomet, described as an 'old Assyrian' by the Christchurch Press, died and was buried there in December 1905.¹⁶⁷ At the same time Sali established a business selling ice

¹⁶⁴ Births, Deaths & Marriages, Central Registry, District of Chatham Islands, Folio number 1945/3711 Ref number 5-0123752.

¹⁶⁵ Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders Early Days*.

¹⁶⁶ Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders Early Days*.

¹⁶⁷ 'Casualties', *PR*, 16 December 1905, p. 11; The Otago newspapers called him 'an Indian hawker'.

cream from a bright red and white cart in the south east corner of Cathedral Square. He married a Pakeha lady the following year – Florence Henrietta Johnstone, from Omakau in Otago¹⁶⁸ – and stated Ceylon (Sri Lanka) as his place of birth on his marriage certificate. They had four daughters, notorious beauties named Rehona, Rupee, Tulah and Florence.¹⁶⁹

As Sali Mahomet was allegedly fluent in Arabic, Russian, German and Punjabi, his services were used as court interpreter from time to time when passing sailors landed on the wrong side of the law. His friendly personality, jovial mood and willingness to help others earned him the affections of Christchurch citizenry and he gained the nickname ‘Ice cream Charlie’. (Charlie, presumably being an Anglicisation of Saleh).

However the Mahomet family were subject to abuse from time to time and the *NZ Truth* example is worth quoting at length as it captures such incidents with surprising brio: ‘A lineal descendant of the late Mr Mahomet, Asiatic prophet, sells ice cream in Cathedral Square, Christchurch, and is endangering the White New Zealand movement by keeping a European missus.’ The newspaper goes on to elucidate an ‘an obscene language case’ involving Mrs Mahomet and ‘a white trash person named Albert Plaquet’.¹⁷⁰ Cross-examination by Mr Donnelly in court disclosed the fact that the neighbours ‘loved each other like bigots of rival religious creeds’. A neighbour called Mrs Manx relayed that an intoxicated Mr Plaquet had taken up the sidewalk, hailing forth:

‘Look at me, you blankers,’ he roared; ‘it’s all you blanky well have to do, but look at me, you blankers.’ Peeler Smith, a bulky member of the police tug-of-war team that had to pull second to the Maoris, spoke to Plaquet about the complaint and the seedy person said he was drunk at the time and didn’t remember the language. Lawyer Donnelly emphasised ... that the dark person’s missus didn’t leave the spot and avoid any remarks that might be expected from a drunken individual in the circumstances. Plaquet was a married man and hard-working and deserved the clemency of the Court.¹⁷¹

Ultimately Plaquet was fined ‘twenty bob and costs’. The case speaks volumes about language used freely by contemporary journalists (‘the dark person’s missus’, ‘lineal

See: ‘Casualties’, *ODT*, 18 December 1905, p. 5.

¹⁶⁸ ‘Marriages’, *ST*, 6 January 1906, p. 5.

¹⁶⁹ Richard Greenaway, *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief: Biographies of Canterbury Personalities Written for the Millennium and for the 150th Anniversary of the Canterbury Settlement* (Christchurch: Christchurch City Libraries, 2000), p. 41.

¹⁷⁰ ‘Mahomet’s Missus’, *NZT*, 6 March 1909, p. 6.

¹⁷¹ ‘Mahomet’s Missus’, *NZT*, 6 March 1909, p. 6.

descendant of the late Mr Mahomet, Asiatic prophet' ... 'endangering the White New Zealand movement'). It is also interesting that the case does not appear in either the *Press* or the *Star*, prominent Christchurch newspapers of the era. Newspapers reflect both those in power and those to whom they intend to sell their product to. Clearly, neither the *Press* nor the *Star* were interested in repeating or elucidating the colourful vulgarities of Plaquet aimed at the family of Sali Mahomet. The following year it was Sali Mahomet's turn to face abuse in the streets. In 1910 a 17 year old delinquent named Robert Meacham verbally abused Mahomet in the street:

The descendent of Allah's only prophet was obliged to affirm, when it was discovered that the Koran was not kept on the Court premises, and seemed a witness of truth when he said that Meacham put down a valueless copper for an ice cream, but afterwards replaced it with a good one. He was supported by the evidence of others in the statement that Meacham said, 'Blank you!' Also, 'You're only a black blanker, anyhow.' Meacham stated in Court that he called the nig. a 'black blank,' and not a 'black blanker,' which seemed a pretty fine distinction.¹⁷²

A police sub-inspector described Meacham as 'the worst larrikin in Sydenham' and the miscreant was fined £1 and costs.¹⁷³ (Seven years later Meacham was jailed for using chloroform to try to asphyxiate a couple staying inside the Clarendon Hotel.¹⁷⁴) Once again it is difficult to determine what is more intriguing here: the offensive language alleged in court or the salacious language employed by the newspaper. Are we reading serious racist hostility? It is noteworthy, I think, that the Sali Mahomet cases reported here by *NZ Truth* were printed before the First World War. Similar cases involving Sheikh Din (see above) in the 1920s drew a visibly more visceral language. That same year, 1910, Sali Mahomet claimed and won 25 pounds from a Mr W. Williamson for breach of contract regarding the building of a house. The case again drew media attention since the Court evidently didn't have a copy of the Koran available.¹⁷⁵

Persons of the witness's nationality believe that there is on God, name Allah, and that Mahomet is his prophet; so Mahomet merely mentioned that he wouldn't perjure himself, so help him Allah – and Mahomet. In fact, Mahomet helped himself.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² 'Compliments Pass', *NZT*, 19 March 1910, p. 6.

¹⁷³ 'Compliments Pass', *NZT*, 19 March 1910, p. 6.

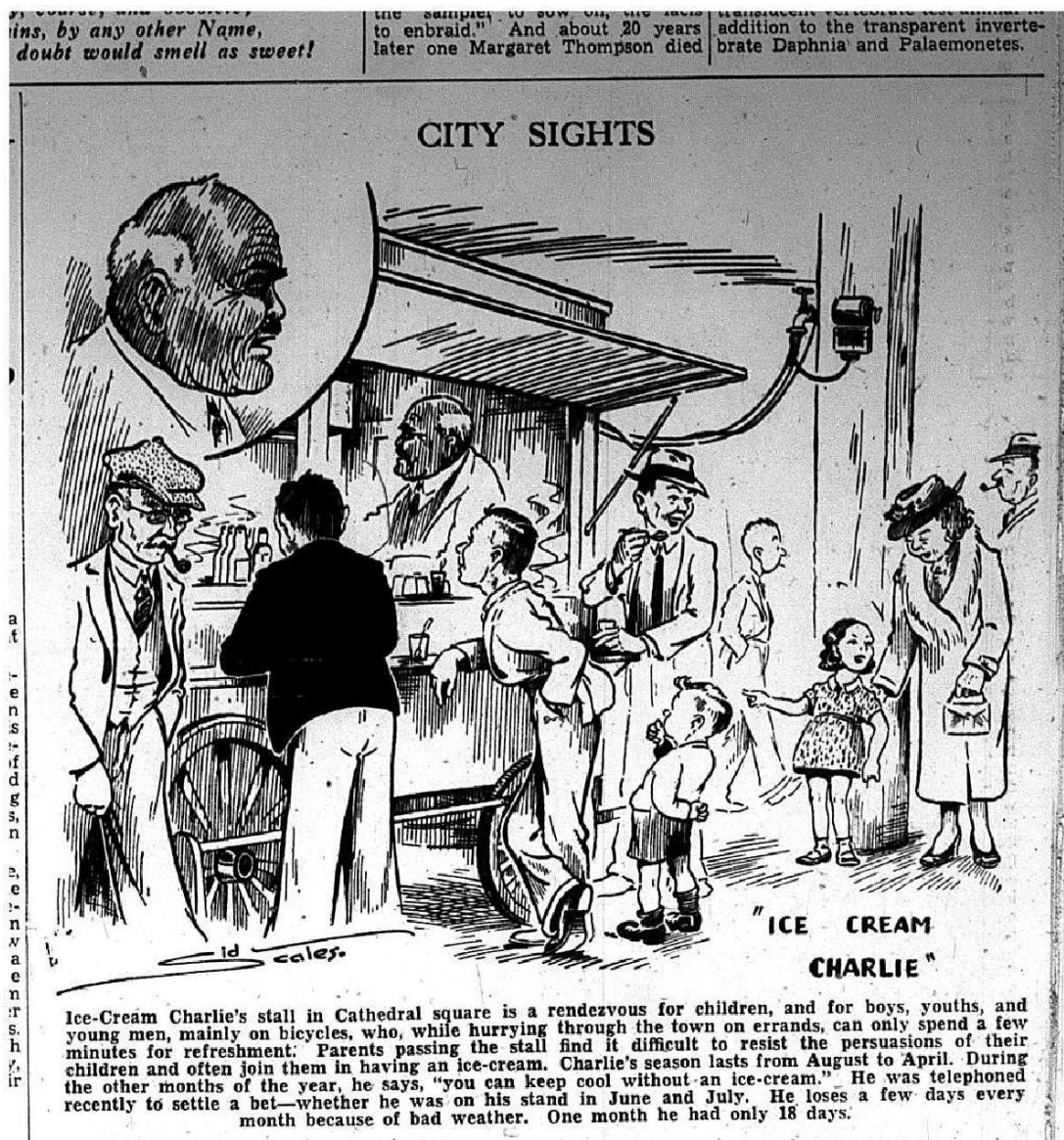
¹⁷⁴ 'The Chloroform Case', *NZT*, 18 August 1917, p. 5.

¹⁷⁵ 'Magistrate's Court', *PR* (29 July 1910), p. 2.

¹⁷⁶ Untitled, *NZT* (30 July 1910), p. 7.

As with Wuzerah so many years earlier, the issue of Muslims swearing an oath on the Quran in court, keeps arising. Sali Mahomet otherwise became a respected figure in Christchurch and from all accounts his ice creams were popular and passed all the health and sanitation requirements of the day. After his death in 1943 the Star-Sun newspaper carried a long verbose obituary observing that:

Ice-cream Charlie was regarded as part of the summer time scenery and the first appearance of Mr Mahomet and his ice cream was looked upon by the people of Christchurch as the official beginning of Summer.¹⁷⁷



Scales, Sydney Ernest, 'Ice Cream Charlie', *Press*, 28 January 1939, p19.

¹⁷⁷ Richard Greenaway, *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief*, p. 43.

A generous man he frequently contributed gallons of ice cream to charitable events and involved himself in community functions such as the St Albans Red Cross February Fete.¹⁷⁸ Sometimes he was too generous: he befriended and invited the entire Indian hockey team home for dinner without warning his wife, when they toured New Zealand in 1935. We can also see a measure of his wider popularity, perhaps also his integration into society, with the 1939 caricature of 'Ice Cream Charlie' by Sid Scales, cartoonist for the Christchurch Press.¹⁷⁹

It is hard to gauge Sali Mahomet's religious position or knowledge. His principal biographer Richard Greenaway writes that although he did not really practice his religion, neither did he disclaim it or convert to another faith. 'He kept a copy of the Koran, avoided pork, bacon, sausages and alcohol but made no attempt to encourage his family to study Islam.'¹⁸⁰ Would it have been different had his progeny been boys? In the 1930s Mahomet employed an orphan at his ice cream stall. Mahomet became attached to the young man who was later killed during World War Two. As next of kin Mahomet received the telegram notifying the young man's death and later his personal possessions. In 1942 Sali Mahomet was crippled by a stroke. His family assert they were defrauded by a legal firm and they were obliged to sell up and relocate to a more humble residence at 55 Ward Street in Addington. 'In April 1943 Sali entered the Old Men's Home, Ashburton, and there, on 7 October, succumbed to a second stroke.'¹⁸¹ He was buried with his late father Sultan in the Linwood cemetery.

Sali Mahomet remains something of an enigma. Was he the first Muslim refugee to New Zealand? Or the first successfully integrated Muslim settler? Was he a man who carefully balanced his own personal, private faith with his need to engage in an entirely non-Muslim (and sometimes hostile) environment? For a long time Sali Mahomet preferred to identify himself as Punjabi or even Sri Lankan rather than central Asian. Clearly the link to the British Empire was very important to him. Greenaway writes convincingly that Sali Mahomet was absolutely 'devoted to his wife.....Loving and indulgent to his daughters, he also encouraged them to gain as much as possible from their education.'¹⁸² It is hard to imagine a better epithet and above all it is hard not to respect such an excellent role model of Muslim manhood.

¹⁷⁸ *PR*, 29 January 1916, p. 7.

¹⁷⁹ To which Mahomet responded: 'You know Sid, I told you I was not an Indian.' See: Greenaway, *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁸⁰ Greenaway, *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief*, p. 43.

¹⁸¹ Greenaway, *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief*, p. 43.

¹⁸² Greenaway, *Rich Man, Poor Man, Environmentalist, Thief*, p. 43.

Kara Family and Other Migrants

The other and perhaps ultimately most important Muslim family to settle in Christchurch was that of Mohammad Kara, who hailed from Adad in the Gujarat province of western India. Like other Muslim men from the Gujarat (most of whom settled in and around Auckland) the Kara family 'were all Sunni Vohras of the Hanafi branch of Islam.'¹⁸³ Born in 1892 Mohammed Kara arrived in New Zealand in 1907. Apparently he had spent some time in South Africa and then decided to try his luck in Fiji. Whilst passing through New Zealand Kara applied for Residency and secured it. He quickly established himself as a hawker and small businessman in Christchurch where he was involved in bottle and glass recycling. Curiously there is no evidence that he was ever in contact with the aforementioned Sali Mahomet and he seems to have maintained closer ties to the Hindu Gujarati community.¹⁸⁴ According to Leckie, whose research was based on oral interviews, Kara brought out his 13 year old son Ismail in 1921. However there is a Passenger List that would suggest his son was 11 and arrived in 1923.¹⁸⁵ Mohammad Kara returned to India in 1927. His son was community minded and in later years joined the local Canterbury Indian Association at its inception in 1936. Apparently Mohammed Kara senior was very devout and insisted on undertaking his own halal slaughter of chicken and sheep in his back yard until City Council bylaws restricted this.¹⁸⁶ In 1949 Suliman Ismail Kara – the son of Ismail Kara and grandson of Mohammad Kara – travelled to New Zealand, aged 8 years old, to join his father. Suliman Ismail was later joined by a younger brother named Yusuf. By 1960 Suliman Kara, a man of quiet modesty, was operating his own dairy and was also active in the local Indian Association. In 1977 Suliman Ismail Kara would be elected the inaugural president of the Muslim Association of Canterbury.

A Punjabi Muslim named Sher Mohammed also seems to have operated in Christchurch and Dunedin around a similar time period and also in glass and bottle recycling. In May 1918 a 32 year old 'labourer' called Sher Mohammed arrived in Auckland on board the *Makura*.¹⁸⁷ In 1925 and 1929 newspaper reported two court cases: one involved Sher Mohammed in a fight with two Hindu gentlemen, Blane Govind and Fakir Chibba, and in the later case a

¹⁸³ Jacqueline Valerie Leckie, 'They Sleep Standing Up: Gujaratis in New Zealand to 1945', p. 102.

¹⁸⁴ Santo Budhia, 'A History of the Indian Settlement in Christchurch', Unpublished Master's thesis (University of Canterbury, 1978-79), p. 20.

¹⁸⁵ 'New Zealand, Archives New Zealand, Passenger Lists, 1839-1973,' index and images, *FamilySearch*, Kara Mohamad, 07 Aug 1923; citing , Ship, Arrival Port Wellington, National Archives, Wellington; FHL microfilm 004466349.; 'New Zealand, Archives New Zealand, Passenger Lists, 1839-1973,' Mohamad, 07 Aug 1923; citing , Ship, Arrival Port Wellington, National Archives, Wellington; FHL microfilm 004466349.

¹⁸⁶ Jacqueline Leckie, 'They Sleep Standing Up: Gujaratis in New Zealand to 1945', p.325.

¹⁸⁷ 'New Zealand, Archives New Zealand, Passenger Lists, 1839-1973,' index and images, *FamilySearch*, Sher Mohamed, 26 May 1918, p.69.

drunk Pakeha woman threw a bottle through his window.¹⁸⁸ This certainly gives us an insight into the social circles that some early Muslim forerunners moved in. The electoral rolls also suggest a Sher Mohammed worked in Dunedin in 1928 and this may well be the same character.¹⁸⁹ In January 1930 a bottle collector named Sher Mohammad left Wellington for Sydney and never returned.¹⁹⁰

The only other early Muslim settler in Canterbury during this period was one Ahmet ben Redi, also known to the authorities as Ali Mahomet. Ali Mahomet was born in Muscat, Oman, in 1856. Evidently he worked as a 'fireman' (stoker) for the British merchant navy for a period before taking up similar employment with New Zealand Rail at some stage. Unfortunately the records are slightly contradictory. He entered the Tuarangi retirement home for gentlemen in Ashburton on 26 September 1930 before his demise and burial in an unmarked grave the following year. However, according to the Electoral Rolls he was listed as a cook and resident at the retirement home between 1931 and 1935.¹⁹¹ Alternate sources state he died on 30 September 1936 and another source on 3 November 1937.¹⁹² The National Archive in Wellington contain a fascinating 42 page naturalisation file with testimonials stating he had 'no Communistic tendencies'. Ali Mahomet never married or had children.¹⁹³ His biography remains interesting for several reasons. Firstly, his presence reminds us that not all early Muslim settlers were Indian. Secondly, his name change suggests he simplified rather than anglicized his name in order to facilitate integration rather than assimilation. Thirdly, there is no evidence of any religious sentiments one way or the other (for example, swearing an oath in court on the Quran or alternately marrying inside a church).

Although there is no direct or documentary evidence that any of these men (Din, Sali Mahomet, Kara, Sher Mohammad or Ali Mahomet) or other Muslim sailors or sojourners ever met, socialised or prayed together, neither is there any evidence that they didn't. We have seen Ice-cream Charlie welcome the visiting Indian hockey team to his private home and serve as a court translator for episodes involving foreign sailors, so it is logical to

¹⁸⁸ 'The Courts', *PR*, 19 February 1925, p. 5; 'The Courts', *PR*, 15 January 1929, p. 4; 'Threw Bottle', *NZT*, 31 January 1929, p. 5.

¹⁸⁹ Mohammad, Sher, *Dunedin North General Roll* (Dunedin: Evening Star Co., 1928), p.143.

¹⁹⁰ 'New Zealand, Archives New Zealand, Passenger Lists, 1839-1973', index and images, *FamilySearch*, Sher Mohammad, 31 January 1930, p.73.

¹⁹¹ Ali Mahomet, *1931 Electoral District of Mid-Canterbury – Supplementary Roll*, November 1931 (Ellesmere Guardian Office, Leeston), page 11.; Ali Mahomet, *1935 Electoral District of Mid-Canterbury – Supplementary Roll*, July 1935 (Ashburton Mail and Guardian Co. Ltd., Ashburton), page 106.

¹⁹² *New Zealand births, deaths and marriages 1840-1990: indexes* (Lower Hutt, 1937), p.293.

¹⁹³ Naturalisation - Application for - Redi, Ahmet Ben Known as Mahomet, Ali, R24522018, ACGO, Series 8333, IA1, Box 1731, Record Number 1933/158/1.

assume he and some of the other men may have been aware of each other and they may even have chosen to socialise from time to time in some capacity. Informal contacts also seem very likely given the fact that the overall population was lower during this time period and that the presence of ethnic minorities would have been more visible inside the British colony.

The 1950s saw the first significant influx of Muslim refugees into the South Island. In 1951 the *MS Goya* docked in Wellington on three occasions to discharge thousands of eastern European refugees, a small minority of which were Muslims from Albania, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.¹⁹⁴ This influx was important for several reasons. To start with it was the first arrival of large numbers of Muslim refugees. Secondly, all these Muslims were physiologically European and thus had more opportunity to integrate and assimilate into the dominant Anglo-European Pakeha population. These two points alone mark these men out from the Asian Muslims who were arriving over the same period as workers or students. Thirdly, there was, they demonstrate the diverse range of religious and ethnic expression within the Muslim community. Writing of these eastern European Muslims, Shepard states:

This group appears to have been more inclined to assimilate into Pakeha society and attenuate their Muslim identity. Some, however, have remained active in Muslim and ethnic matters and have publicly expressed their concern in the recent crises in Bosnia and Kosovo.¹⁹⁵

One of the first Muslim refugees from the *MS Goya* to be reported in the South Island newspapers was Shaban Kryeziu from Albania. In September 1951 he was conducting swimming lessons at the Invercargill tepid baths.¹⁹⁶ When the Department of Internal Affairs conducted a survey on the employment and welfare of the *Goya* men in 1953 there were over a dozen Muslim men from the *MS Goya* were scattered across the South Island working from Invercargill to Christchurch. Several were sharing accommodation.¹⁹⁷ However only four were to stay here permanently. Ibrahim Seidamet will be discussed more below. Husein Hatipov, Adem Firkatovic and Samso Jusovic settled in Christchurch.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴ Peter Plowman, *Australian Migrant Ships 1946 – 1977* (Dural, N.S.W.: Rosenberg Publishing, 2006), p.36.

¹⁹⁵ William Shepard, 'New Zealand's Muslims and Their Organisations', *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 8, Number 2 (December 2006), p. 10.

¹⁹⁶ 'Escape from Russians', *ODT*, 28 September 1951, p.4.

¹⁹⁷ Halit Bajram, Adem Firkatovic, Munib Ganic, Samso Jusovic, Bahri Ahmet Kavaja, Akif Keskin, Mazhar Krasniqi, Nevruz Mollaj, Kaimak Murteza, Nurko Omerovic, Nazif Ramadan, Kamber Rustemai, Wilson Shkambi, Aris Zeqollari. See: (IA/52/15) or Internal Affairs; Series 52; Reference 15 'Immigrant Name List Goya'.

¹⁹⁸ Samso, sometimes written as 'Semso', is the Yugoslav adaptation of the Arabic name 'Shams'

Husein Hatipov was a Slavic Muslim from Bulgaria. He died in 2009.¹⁹⁹ Born in Zavidovici in December 1930, the son of Ibrahim and Emina, Adem Firkatovic was a farm labourer who escaped from Tito's army.²⁰⁰ In the 1950s he married a Pakeha lady from Greymouth at the (Anglican) St Johns Church when employed as a rubber worker in Christchurch. By 1958 they had set up a coffee lounge called the Copper Cat on High Street in central Christchurch and later operated a restaurant on Harewood Road. According to the records of the IRO (International Refugee Organisation: a precursor of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees) Samso Jusovic – pronounced in English and thus also known as Yusovich – was born on 20 October 1926 in 'Dusnacha', Yugoslavia. This is most likely Dušmanići, a small village in the municipality of Prijepolje in Serbia.²⁰¹ Jusovic was described as a farm labourer and living in exile in Italy, under the name Semcho Gioussovitch, when he was accepted for the refugee programme. When he died on 8 June 1990 Jusovic was perhaps one of the oldest Muslim refugees in Canterbury.²⁰² Mansoor Khawaja and Jafar Hall, an English convert to Islam resident in Christchurch, visited him in a hospice where he expressed a strong desire to visit and pray at the mosque. This was not to be as he passed away on Friday morning only hours before the *Juma Salat* (congregational prayers). A sympathetic obituary was recorded in the national Muslim newsletter:

One of the Yugoslavian Brother, Samso Yusovich died at the age of 69 on 8th June 1990. He came to NZ in the early 1950's and met out (sic) Muslim brothers for the first time a few weeks ago and was still able to recite kalimah shahadah, Alhamdulillah. It was a very sad moment especially for the few brothers who used to visit him occasionally. He was buried on 11th June in Ruru cemetery.²⁰³

Another Muslim from Bosnia, Nurko (Nuredeen) Omerovic, settled in Dunedin and worked the railways his entire life.²⁰⁴ He died in May 1978 and was cremated.²⁰⁵ Akif Keskin from

(sun). The Slavic 'Jusovic' is pronounced 'Yusovich' in vernacular English and means 'son of Yusuf'.

¹⁹⁹ 'Obituaries', *PR*, 6 March 2009, p. C7.

²⁰⁰ (L/22/9/55) or Labour Department; Series 22/9; Reference 55 'International Refugee Organization Resettlement to New Zealand Nominal Roll of Emigrants Departing on S/S 'Goya' from Naples on 8th July 1951', p.33; (IA/52/15) or Internal Affairs; Series 52; Reference 15 'Immigrant Name List Goya', p.33.

²⁰¹ (L/22/9/55) or Labour Department; Series 22/9; Reference 55 'International Refugee Organization Resettlement to New Zealand Nominal Roll of Emigrants Departing on S/S 'Goya' from Naples on 8th July 1951', p.24; For more on the complex history of the Sandžak, see: Kenneth, Morrison, and Elizabeth Roberts, *The Sandžak. A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.227.

²⁰² 'Yusovich', *PR*, 11 June 1990, p.47.

²⁰³ 'Christchurch', *Al-Muslim*, Volume 2&3, 1990, p. 39.

²⁰⁴ (L/22/5) or Labour Department; Series 22; Reference 5 'The International Refugee Organization Mass Resettlement to New Zealand Nominal Roll of Persons departing from Piraeus, Greece on M/V Goya on 31st March 1951', p.40.

Macedonia (then in Yugoslavia), was also on board the *MS Goya*. Keskin operated a kebab shop in Dunedin in the 1950s and 1960s before retiring to the USA in 1976.

The Turk of Dunedin

Officially Akif Keskin was born on 27 July 1923 in Skopje, currently the capital of the largely Slavic and Orthodox-Christian republic of Macedonia. Family and friends in Macedonia knew him by the Slavic diminutive cognomen 'Ako'. His family, however, assert he was born in 1924 and added a year to his age in order to fight during World War Two. His father Mehmet was a Muslim farmer and his mother's name was Nurye (nee Sabit). Very little is known about Akif Keskin's early life except that as part of the Islamic minority of Macedonia (and Yugoslavia) his family most certainly looked upon Muslim Turkey and Turks very favourably.²⁰⁶ It is understood he attended a 'modern' school rather than a religious class or *Mekteb*. As an adult, Keskin had some familiarity with the Quran although whatever Arabic he had picked up was somewhat limited. The family was basically Slavic but in New Zealand Keskin always resolutely identified himself as a Turk. When he was young his father had remarried an Albanian woman and Akif Keskin certainly spoke Albanian. An older generation of Albanian migrants to New Zealand who knew him personally insist that Keskin was essentially Albanian. However what we do know for certain is that he was able to register himself as a refugee with the IRO. In a 1976 interview Keskin described himself as a tannery worker in Turkey who 'wasted little time after seeing a publicity film on New Zealand in a Istanbul picture theatre in 1950.'²⁰⁷ Family understood that he fought against the Communists in the Balkans during World War Two, although in what capacity is harder to establish with any accuracy. After the 1945 victory of Socialism his family's property was confiscated or lost and Keskin himself was branded an enemy of the people and placed on some sort of Wanted List by the Communist authorities. He escaped to Turkey by walking across the border through neighbouring Greece, and his (surviving) extended family slowly moved there too later. Oral informants believe he changed his surname from either Nasufovic or Agaocich to Keskin (Turkish for 'sharp' or 'keen') at a Red Cross camp.

²⁰⁵ 'Births, Deaths and Marriages', *ODT*, 8 May 1978, p.3.; 'A Brief History of Muslims in Otago', *Rocket Science* (November 2014), p.12.

²⁰⁶ In the same way that Protestants of Northern Ireland look sympathetically upon their ties to the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Muslims of Eastern Europe look towards the Turks and Turkey. Since the retraction of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, many Muslims of Eastern Europe have migrated to and settled in what is now modern Turkey. There are currently more Slavic Muslims (and their descendants) from the Sandžak province of Serbia and Bosnia living in the republic of Turkey than living in the Sandžak and Bosnia for instance. See: Kenneth, Morrison and Elizabeth Roberts, *The Sandžak. A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.227; Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp.139-140; Fikret Karčić. *The Bosniaks and the Challenges of Modernity* (Sarajevo: El Kalem, 1999), pp.109-11.

²⁰⁷ 'Akif Keskin to Leave: Turkish New Zealander Gives Up his Delight', *ODT*, 12 June 1976, p.19.

In 1951 Keskin departed from the Greek port of Piraeus on board the Norwegian refugee boat the *MS Goya*. It arrived in Wellington on 1 May and according to the IRO roll Keskin was described as a furrier by trade.²⁰⁸ His first job in New Zealand was with Fletcher Construction Ltd. in Dunedin as a plasterer. However he also worked as a grid blaster at a hydro dam in Otago and three years later when the Internal Affairs Department held an internal review of the *MS Goya* refugees, Keskin was working at the freezing works at Pareora, outside Timaru.²⁰⁹ Interestingly he was staying at exactly the same boarding house where many of the resident halal slaughtermen reside today – known colloquially as their ‘Halal House’. When he first arrived in New Zealand, Keskin observed the fast during Ramadan and exchanged seasonal greeting cards with the Turkish embassy in Australia. In 1953 he married a 24-year old Roman Catholic spinster named Maria (nee Steffans), from Aachen in Germany. Akif and Maria had three children and gave them Muslim-Turkish names: Soraya Nurye in 1955, Anafa Yusuf in 1956 and Yasmin Leila in 1960. In 1956 Akif Keskin opened his first restaurant on Princess Street in the central city area – most probably the first Turkish restaurant in New Zealand. He was possibly one of the first in the country to manufacture yoghurt, pizza and American style hamburgers in Dunedin. He is recorded in the *Wise’s New Zealand Post Office Directory, Volume IV, Otago-Southland* edition for 1957-58, as a proprietor living at 39 Cresswell Street.²¹⁰

Curiously enough, Keskin was not the only Turk in Dunedin during this period. Nor was he the first to be publicised in the local newspapers. The 1957 Anzac Day ceremony in Dunedin was attended by one Ismet Eryetishir, a Turk studying at the Otago University medical school who also held a commission in the Turkish army. Eryetishir also claimed that his father had served in the Gallipoli campaign and attended the ceremony at the massive Cenotaph War memorial column in the centre of Dunedin in complete Turkish military uniform. He and his wife were very well received.²¹¹

In 1959, the proprietor of the Dunedin Istanbul restaurant, and a Bosnian, Adem Ferkatovich, attended the ceremony and laid a wreath on behalf of the Turkish community. This was the beginning of 17 years of association by Keskin with Dunedin Anzac Day and the local RSA.²¹²

²⁰⁸ (IA/52/15) or Internal Affairs; Series 52; Reference 15 ‘Immigrant Name List Goya’, unpaginated.

²⁰⁹ (L/22/5) or Labour Department Series 22, Reference 5, unpaginated.

²¹⁰ *Wise’s New Zealand Post Office Directory, Volume IV, Otago-Southland* edition (Auckland: Wise’s Publications, 1957), pp.19, 327.

²¹¹ See ‘Mr Holland Will Attend City Anzac Services’, *ODT*, 24 April 1957, p. 1; ‘Gallipoli Men Display Their Quality On March’, *ODT*, 26 April 1957, p. 5; and ‘Wives Of Gallipoli Veterans Take Part In This Year’s Anzac Commemoration’, *ODT*, 26 April 1957, p. 6.

²¹² George Frederick Davis, ‘Anzac Day Meanings and Memories: New Zealand, Australian and

Ferkatovich here is presumably the same Firkatovic of Harewood, Christchurch (see above).

A 1959 *Otago Daily Times* report mentioned that Keskin hosted a 'score of Gallipoli veterans as well as the Mayor, Mr T. K. S. Sidey, and Mr F. J. Gray, of the R.S.A.' attended a special Turkish lunch at his restaurant on Anzac Day. His business was decorated with the Turkish flag and the Union Jack hung side by side (not the New Zealand flag, one notes) and a floral wreath featuring the words: 'Peace and Goodwill to all Nations on behalf of the Turkish Government.'²¹³

Keskin's business strategy over the next two decades was both simple and complex, and evolved in various ways reflecting circumstances, personal ingenuity and the careful cultivation of a network of local contacts and collaborators. In its most basic form Akif Keskin regularly hosted the Gallipoli veterans then RSA members for dinner every Anzac Day at his restaurant on Princess Street in the central city area.²¹⁴ This generated goodwill and positive media attention. For example in 1961 the *Otago Daily Times* enthused that thanks to a 'magic carpet' provided by Keskin, ten Gallipoli veterans of Dunedin spent the evening of Anzac Day in 'the Arabian Nights splendour' of the Istanbul Restaurant's new 'Turkish Room'.

'I felt I had to do something on behalf of my country,' said Mr Keskin, who believes he is the only Turk in New Zealand. While his guests sat Turkish style, cross-legged on cushions around the room, Mr Keskin read a letter from Turkey's minister of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the republic's Head of State, General Cemal Cursel ... Mr Keskin said his father and grandfather had fought at Gallipoli.²¹⁵

In November 1961 Keskin was briefly hospitalised with an ulcer following a breakdown in his health from work exhaustion and this was reported in the local newspaper. A week later, on 10 November, his restaurant caught fire while his wife was there alone and in the ensuing disaster the premises was thoroughly gutted. Unfortunately the fire broke out at 4:30 p.m. and the fire engines were slowed down by the traffic. Keskin's wife escaped with minor burns but the business was closed for repairs for three months. The incident was front page news in the *Otago Daily Times* as the Dunedin Metropolitan Fire Brigade had effectively

Turkish Perspectives on a Day of Commemoration in the Twentieth Century', PhD thesis, (Otago University 2009), p. 282. Also: pp. 239, footnote 92; 256, footnote 194; 297, footnotes 62, 63 & 64.

²¹³ 'Cenotaph Ceremony', *ODT*, 27 April 1959, p. 5.

²¹⁴ 'Duty Done by Soldiers to Country in Peril', *ODT*, 26 April, 1960, p. 5.

²¹⁵ 'Turkish Treat Provided For Veterans', *ODT*, 26 April 1961, p. 5.

closed off the city centre to deal with the fire at peak hour traffic.²¹⁶ On 2 February the restaurant re-opened with new decorations. However at the end of the month Keskin was involved in a minor car accident and was back in hospital after his car was badly damaged.²¹⁷ Many Asian Muslim university students and sailors stopping at Port Chalmers frequented the restaurant, particularly Somalis and sometimes Turks working the German Freighters. Well before yoghurt became a household name he used to make it in his restaurant and introduced it to patients at the hospitals through his friendship with the local doctors. Keskin might have made a small fortune if he had fully appreciated how popular the product would be in the future. Akif Keskin and his wife were evidently very popular people and the entire family were featured prominently in the women's section of the *Otago Daily Times* in April 1963 after nine month holiday in Germany left the children unable to communicate properly in English.²¹⁸

In 1964 Keskin was photographed by the *Otago Daily Times* marching with war veterans through Dunedin's main street for the Anzac Day service and the following year he accompanied a group to Turkey to mark the 50th anniversary of the battle. In 1966 he visited Turkey again and souvenired a piece of rock from Gallipoli that he took back to Dunedin and presented to the RSA. A photograph of Mr Keskin at Gallipoli featured on the front page of the *Evening Star* newspaper of Dunedin.²¹⁹ In August 1968 Keskin purchased a large property in north Taieri, the land north of Mosgiel. The property was known as the 'Salisbury Estate' and he announced plans to convert it into a large German-style outdoor restaurant. The land was located on the periphery of Dunedin city and even today maintains a rural atmosphere. The four acres had been transformed by the late previous owner from scrub to a collection of attractive gardens blending native and exotic trees marked by a distinctive fountain. Keskin aimed to compliment dining with outdoor activities and a playground for children.²²⁰ In 1969 the *Wises New Zealand Post Office Directory, Volume IV, Otago-Southland* edition, identifies Keskin as a restaurateur resident at 18 Dunblane Street.²²¹

In 1970 Keskin relocated from Princess Street and set up a new restaurant at 43 Moray Place, again in the heart of central Dunedin city. His new enterprise was named the Ankara Restaurant and featured all the customary mock-Turkish decorations. A new feature was an

²¹⁶ 'Fire Drama in City', *ODT*, 11 November 1961, pp. 1, 5.

²¹⁷ 'Remodelled Restaurant Starts Anew after Fire', *ODT*, 2 February 1962, p.7; 'Restaurant Proprietor Has Run of Bad Luck', *ODT*, 23 February 1962, p. 5.

²¹⁸ 'Their English Is Forgotten', *ODT*, 22 April 1963, p. 12.

²¹⁹ 'Mr Akif Keskin', *The Evening Star*, 9 March 1966, p. 1.

²²⁰ 'Continental Chalet Proposed', *ODT*, 19 September 1968, p. 5.

²²¹ *Wise's New Zealand Post Office Directory, Otago-Southland* (1969), Volume 4, p.455.

offer to dress the staff in Turkish national costume for special occasions and functions. While the pride of the old restaurant had been tropical fish (not on the menu), the new one featured two bright yellow canaries to provide ‘music’. There was also a unique cabinet full of curios on display: ‘old pieces of china bearing intricate designs, delicate lamps and a large collection of Turkish pipes, hand carved and unusual in shape.’²²² In 1976 Keskin left New Zealand. Initially he returned to Europe, planning to settle in Germany with his wife and children. The Salisbury Estate business had not been as popular as hoped and he sold it reluctantly in June.²²³ In 1977 Keskin and his son Anafa visited Skopje and they later moved from Germany to Turkey and then to California. There Keskin set up shop again and helped initiate Anzac Day services with the expatriate community of New Zealanders. He was last interviewed by the *Otago Daily Times* in April 1982 when attending the Anzac Day parade in Dunedin.²²⁴ In January 2006 the *Otago Daily Times* reported that friends in Queenstown had met Keskin with his son and daughters in Istanbul in 1986. At that point he had been planning to resettle in Izmir.²²⁵ In 1989 Akif Keskin became ill and travelling with a close Albanian friend, visited his son Anafa Yusuf in the USA. The Albanian friend reminds us that in exile Keskin chose to socialise with other Muslims from eastern Europe. Over the years some Albanians have suggested to me that Keskin was in fact ‘basically’ Albanian but the family insist on a Slavonic heritage. This minor point reiterates that his case is one of ever fluctuating identity. Akif Keskin died on 4 December 1991 at the age of 67 and was buried at the Muslim cemetery in Orange County, outside Los Angeles.

Akif’s Keskin’s much reported career can perhaps best be understood in contrast to Ferkatovich or perhaps yet another Muslim refugee who also arrived on the *MS Goya* and operated a food business in the South Island. Ibrahim Seidamet was a 36 year-old Crimean Tatar from Alupka when he settled here and his IRO documents record him as a farmer.²²⁶ In 1952 he was interviewed briefly and sympathetically by an Australian newspaper regarding access to gold his father had sent to Turkey.²²⁷ By 1960 Seidamet and his Pakeha wife June were running the Ascot Café on Manchester Street in the heart of Christchurch.²²⁸ He retired in the 1970s and died on 3 July 1985 ‘after a short illness’. Evidently he was cremated.²²⁹ There is no evidence he was in contact with other Muslims in the city or indeed

²²² ‘A New Continental Style Restaurant’, *ODT*, 15 December 1970, p. 14.

²²³ ‘Akif Keskin to Leave: Turkish New Zealander Gives Up his Delight’, *ODT*, 12 June 1976, p. 19.

²²⁴ ‘Likes Life Exciting’, *ODT*, 23 April 1982, p. 1.

²²⁵ ‘Akif Keskin returned...’, *ODT*, 21 January 2006, p. 37; Abdullah Drury, ‘Period of peace and meditation’, *ODT* (13 August 2010), page 15.

²²⁶ (IA/52/15) or Internal Affairs; Series 52; Reference 15 ‘Immigrant Name List Goya’, p.41.

²²⁷ ‘Fortune is in hiding’, *The Argus*, 3 April 1952, p.7.

²²⁸ *Wise’s New Zealand Post Office Directory*, Canterbury-Marlborough, Nelson and Westland (1960), Volume 3, p.405.

²²⁹ ‘Deaths’, *PR*, 4 July 1985, p.39.

that he paid any attention to his Islamic cultural roots. In fact there is a paucity of information about Ibrahim Seidamet and Adem Ferkatovich at all when compared to Keskin, demonstrating that it was possible for Muslim immigrants to forgo their religious heritage and identity, and to maintain a prosperous business and a low profile at the same time.

We may remark upon Keskin's intense buoyancy and overwhelming energy, but also on the profound sense of ambiguity – especially of identity – that seems to have marked his entire life. Although a serious man at home, he possessed a sense of humour – so much so that apart from his RSA contacts many of his personal friends were younger than him. His energy appears to manifest itself at all stages of his career in New Zealand and one imagines as a youth he must have been irrepressible and although an amiable character from all accounts, he did not stand out as a man of eccentric personality however and was never involved in pugnacious theological debates. Keskin successfully steered clear of any potential public conflict or controversy, and effortlessly entered into the lives of his contemporaries and their interests. His entrepreneurial form and strategy built upon his participation within a system of intersecting circles of social and business acquaintances who were bound together by mutual relationships of economic interdependence.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to explore Muslim settlement in the South Island of New Zealand in the first half of the twentieth century. Towards this end it has focused on the biographies of several Muslim immigrants. The historical evidence demonstrates that most of these men were oblivious of one another. At any given point over the past 150 years the majority of Muslims in New Zealand have indeed been foreign born and the absence of any one dominant phenotype (racially or linguistically) only serves to further confuse outsiders looking for irreducible social identities. Can their children be counted as Muslims? For most, outside the Kara family, the answer must be negative. In fact one of the dominant themes and discourses here has been the elasticity of identities. Muslims were identified broadly as 'Hindoos' and Turkmenistanis as 'Assyrians' to highlight the most obvious howlers. However, Muslim immigrants could also play this game and individuals could ascribe their own identities variously as well. At one point Ice cream Charlie stated he was Ceylonese for instance, presumably to foster a more positive reception inside a British colony. Keskin was a Slavonic Muslim who migrated to the most Scottish part of New Zealand and married a German, whilst telling everyone he was Turkish.

In addition to coming from a wide variety of cultural, linguistic and geographical backgrounds, these Muslim migrants arrived here with a range of skills and experiences.

Their experience and the circumstances of their migration to New Zealand differed, and a significant proportion in this chapter came as refugees from lands outside the British Empire, but most (if not all) seem to have desired to integrate into an Anglo-European society. As in the nineteenth century, few of these Muslim migrants appear to have known each other and because numbers were so low, it seems unlikely that they would do so. No (known) networks of Muslims were formed and there were no group meetings or collective prayers. Apart from the Kara family, all these men took Pakeha or European wives. On the other hand, there must have been some limited contact from time to time: Somali sailors visited Keskin's restaurant for instance. Many of the *MS Goya* men were aware of each other and, like the international students who would arrive in greater numbers in the 1960s and 1970s, some shared accommodation briefly.

The series of questions we are trying to address here is when and how was the Muslim community formed? Who was involved (and who not) and why? This leads organically to a further question of why the Muslim Association was created and who were the foundation members. What were their guiding social, spiritual and ethical objectives? These questions will be addressed in our next chapter where this investigation will lead naturally to the related issue of why the Muslim Association of Canterbury was created in the 1970s.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Shared Space: Muslim Communities and Identities in the South Island

Introduction

In the space of ten years the Muslims of Canterbury had set up their own registered Association and built the first purpose-built mosque in the South Island. The aim of this chapter is to explore the development of the Canterbury Muslim community during the 1960s and 1970s, marking the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury (MAC) between 1976 and 1977; the role played by international students; to outline the construction of the first mosque between 1984 and 1985; and the idea of *'asabiyyah* (group solidarity) over the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. To some extent Muslim community life remains a culture whose models and socio-religious memories (and values) are rooted firmly in Arabia. Kolig observed: 'Islamic doctrine is a reflection of the patriarchal and androcentric social forms traditionally extant in the Middle East'.²³⁰ However, it is one that must ultimately acquire a New Zealand relevance if it is to survive and prosper past the first generation of migrants in subsequent generations of Muslims born in New Zealand

This chapter is composed of four distinct sections. To start with I will examine the relative spike in Muslim numbers during the 1970s, and the means by which local Muslim communal leadership responded and the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in 1977. In this period the various Muslim families and students across Canterbury began to entertain the idea of forming a distinctly Islamic organisation irrespective of ethnicity, nationality or sectarian bias. This chapter will then study the role and nature of overseas Muslim students in the creation of Muslim Associations in Christchurch and Dunedin. I will discuss the first Islamic Centre, acquired in 1979, and the construction of the first real mosque in the South Island over 1984 and 1985. This chapter will conclude that the community evolved from one primarily focused on a very small minority of foreign immigrants and transient students, to one that was more focused on the ongoing needs of a settled Muslim residential population with long term aims and plans. Finally, I will examine the role of *'asabiyyah* as a concept, bringing Muslims drawn from different nationalities together. Goals moved from short term aims to long term objectives. How did a Muslim minority negotiate issues of public space in an increasingly multicultural city?

²³⁰ Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism (Muslim Minorities)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 181.

From this point onwards I concentrate on the Muslim community of Canterbury, especially Christchurch. This is because the Muslim population here becomes more stable and coherent, and develops more continuity in terms of leadership and institutional orientation. Elsewhere in the South Island, such as Dunedin for instance, the numbers of resident Muslims continue to fluctuate.

The Formation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury

The 1970s saw a sharp rise in the number of Muslim residents in Canterbury. This led directly to the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury on 30 May 1977. A review of extant photographs from the era displays an entirely youthful congregation. The next step was the acquisition of a place of worship. This movement ultimately led to the construction of the first purpose-built mosque in the South Island, the second such structure in the entire country after the Ponsonby mosque constructed in Auckland over 1979-80.²³¹

In 1976 there were 181 Muslims living in and around Christchurch. This figure constituted a minority of the total number of 1248 Muslims recorded for all New Zealand. However five years later, in 1981, there were 465 Muslims inside the Canterbury Statistical Area, although the figure had slipped to 363 for the same area ten years later.²³² Community leaders would need two types of competencies: a working knowledge of New Zealand society and some degree of comprehension about the religion. Melding a distinctive Muslim immigrant subculture would prove a challenge. It remains a fact that the Muslim Association of Canterbury was created within a Western society that was politically stable and economically prosperous. The fundamental challenge facing Muslim migrants has always been to simultaneously maintain a distinctly Islamic communal and personal identity, whilst engaging with the wider non-Muslim host society. In the *New Oxford History of New Zealand* Angela McCarthy writes: 'Many scholars have also viewed ethnic identities in terms of formal associations with fellow expatriates and group affiliations in the new homeland.'²³³ Folk groups (especially ethnic and/or religious minorities) tend to adjust their

²³¹ Abdullah Drury, *Islam in New Zealand: The First Mosque* (Christchurch, 2007), pp.33-56;

Mansoor Khawaja, 'Masjid Al-Noor, Christchurch', *Al Muslim*, 1984, p. 13.

²³² *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1976. Volume 3 - Religious Professions*, p.19; *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1981. Volume 3 - Religious Professions*, pp.10-12; These fluctuations undoubtedly reflected the fact that during the 1980s many recent migrants, especially students, moved on to other urban centres inside New Zealand or left for Australia in line with general New Zealand migration patterns. International students of course also often returned to their home countries after completing their tertiary studies. Others were Halal slaughtermen employed in the freezing works who also returned to their home countries periodically.

²³³ Angela McCarthy, 'Migration and Ethnic Identities in the Nineteenth Century', *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 190.

past (or their accounts of the past) to meet the needs of the present and the perceived future. By demonstrating how their predecessors and forebears behaved, Muslim leadership gave interesting clues to their congregation and youth on their place within this country. Two factors played a role over the 1960s and 1970s that led to the creation of the Muslim Association. Firstly there were an increasing number of international visiting Muslim dignitaries, many high profile with media attention. Secondly, and arguably more importantly, there was an increasing number of permanent Muslim residents and international Muslim students.

For many years Suliman Ismail Kara and his brother Mohammed, together with various the Muslim students from Asia, had observed Ramadan privately or at home or in small groups. Suliman Ismail Kara was and remains a very devout Muslim, exuding dignity and a kind nature, and in the 1970s he sought to undertake something for the growing number of resident Muslims – particularly foreign students. He came from a close-knit family and had no difficulty forging friendships and relationships with both non-Muslims and non-Gujaratis alike. Until around the 1970s prayers, Iftar and Eid had been observed at his private home, but he was increasingly aware that there were other Muslims in the city. In 1976 Kara placed an advertisement in the local newspaper, *The Press*, inviting Muslims in Christchurch to conduct Eid al-Adha prayers together. The positive response and the numbers intimated made him realise that his, or any, private home would be inadequate and the decision was undertaken to hire a hall at the University of Canterbury. Thus the first communal prayers came to be held at the Student's Union building at Ilam on 23 November 1976. Apparently some 70 participants attended (mostly men but also some children). Some members of the assembly then proceeded to a city abattoir and sacrificed cattle and lambs.²³⁴ At this stage the Muslim community was largely composed of Asian migrants and students, and for some of them their families, and a handful of Pakeha spouses. Thereafter these families and students met together regularly either at private homes or at the Phillipstown school hall, which was also hired for a regular Sunday gathering after *Zohr Salat* (midday prayers) until 1980. Thus the Association started in early 1977 with Kara as the inaugural president.²³⁵

A 1981 publication of FIANZ (the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand, the national Muslim body) stated the formation and theological rationale of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in the following terms:

The main objectives of the Association are: to propagate the teachings of Islam, as

²³⁴ 'Muslims mark festival in Chch', *The Press (PR)*, 22 November 1977, p. 6.

²³⁵ Mansoor A. Khawaja, 'Masjid Al-Noor, Christchurch', *The Muslim (New Zealand)*, 1984, p. 13.

given in the Holy Quran and Ahadith; to disseminate information on the fundamentals of Islam; to provide a forum for discussion on various aspects of Islam; to cater for the religious needs of Muslims, and to encourage Muslims to strive to live their lives according to the teachings of Islam.²³⁶

Interestingly, specific sectarian theological data, doctrines and considerations did not impose overly upon the structure of the Muslim Association of Canterbury or indeed supersede the need for a constitution in line with New Zealand legal requirements, but were rather felt to be consonant with the needs of the *ummah* (the ‘universal Islamic community’).²³⁷ Such points thereby, were called upon in an ad hoc manner to help shape the institution as it developed. The MAC was formally Sunni in character. Some Muslim migrants had been living in the Canterbury region for decades by this point, some Muslim students for many years (particularly graduates and those with some sort of employment in their field of study), and thus membership of the Association might be considered as polycentric rather than ethnocentric. It was based on shared principles and traditions of Sunni Islam rather than a shared race or nationality. Kara, Dr Quazi, Khawaja and the Malay students identified themselves as Sunni and that was the character the Association took. It is well known that cultural ascent and achievement can be reached by the cumulative fusion of different races within one particular country or space over a period of time. Mohammed Yusuf, a Pakistani immigrant who married a Pakeha wife, was interviewed 30 years later and described:

A mosque established by people who ‘gave no importance to sects at all’ ... ‘When we founded the mosque, we believed we were all Muslim brothers. We didn’t foresee disputes. What dispute could there be?’ ... Few who arrived when Yusuf did have stayed nearly as long.²³⁸

This was possibly one of the most significant errors of the Association leadership during these early years – a failure to adequately prepare for serious internal communal arguments or contests for power within the mosque. This may possibly be linked to an unrealistic expectation that the communal goodwill carefully fostered in the 1970s would continue unchallenged forever. It may also be linked to a poor appreciation or study of history (as we will see in the newsletter histories, below) that might have pointed to such potential questions over power, hegemony, evolving factionalism and mental health issues.

²³⁶ ‘The Muslim Association of Canterbury: Brief History and Main Activities’, *The Muslim*, Volume 1, Number 3, June 1981, p. 25.

²³⁷ Douglas Pratt, *The Challenge of Islam* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), p.23.

²³⁸ Matt Philp, ‘Mosque Woes’, *PR*, 6 May 2006, pp. D1-2.

Without doubt one significant reason why Islamic religious sentiments and Muslim communal identity emerged and was accentuated by the migration experience at this period (apart from the salient point of numbers or ‘critical mass’) was because the ethnic diaspora found itself resident inside an unfamiliar culture, thus removing or at least undermining any potential internal frictions or prejudices amongst the immigrants themselves. Quintessential strangers in a strange land (a similar sentiment of distinct but shared religious values, traditions, observations and identity) drew expatriates together despite differences of ethnic background, nationality and language. The psychology of this scenario must have been aggravated and / or exacerbated when individuals were isolated from their own particular heritage. The Canterbury Muslim community at this stage was a product of its own socio-religious reality and cultural precepts. A true trans-national multi-ethnic project or projection must begin with the axiomatic philosophic query: who are we? A community leadership with a concise answer and able to proffer a complex but suitable articulation supporting their perspectives, will cope better than one without a clear response and with no mental tools against detractors or critics. I believe that the Canterbury Muslim community leadership of the 1970s was successful in this respect. The anthropologist Frederik Barth discussed the use by social groups of categories or ethnic labels that often endured even when individuals moved across political or regional boundaries, and his thoughts are pertinent here. He emphasized the interdependency of ethnic groups but repeated that such ethnic identities are the product of continuous so-called ascriptions and self-ascriptions. For Barth ethnic identity *becomes* and is maintained through relational processes of inclusion and exclusion. He wrote: ‘[...] categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained *despite* changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories.’²³⁹ I believe we observed that to some degree inside the community newsletters and presumably this reflected the communal sentiments of the Muslim community (diverse in origin and education) or that of their leadership.

It is impossible to provide anything so basic as a comprehensive list of Association office-bearers. Far too much documentary, literary and epigraphic material is absent. Nor is it likely that a complete and fully documented history can ever be written since so much oral and community memory, not to mention extant data (newsletters, documents, internal correspondence and so forth), is confused or contested. The Muslim Association of Canterbury was not overly dominated by a single patron or creator with an army of

²³⁹ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), p.9.

experienced secretaries and files. It was and remains a deeply communal organisation as confused as any other human endeavour. The question arises whether or not a dominant patron or family might have helped the Association to avoid some of the unhappy internal strife of the 1990s? Following this communal discord, Ishak Moyhideen set up the Canterbury Islamic Centre (CIC) in 2002. A Malaysian businessman resident in Christchurch, he was very clear to stamp his personal identity and authority on the entity to avoid any ruminations or unsightly grabs for ‘power’. The CIC purchased a disused church on Lincoln Road, Addington, and used it as an alternative Islamic Centre to *Masjid Al-Noor*.²⁴⁰

Suliman Ismail Kara served as the first president of the Muslim Association of Canterbury for two years. Kara was an exemplary leader – driven, and modestly ambitious for the Association. He conceptualised his primary responsibility as that of a humble but firm custodian of the organisation, rather than as a grand founding-father figure. Kara was noted for his deep convictions, courage, patience and rigour, but he never sought the limelight nor did he want to be considered the defining person in New Zealand Muslim history. He was followed as president by an Australian convert to Islam living in Christchurch, Martin Rasjid Wallen (also recorded in some sources as Martin ‘Rashad’ Wallen) in 1979. This was the first major change that signalled a transformation from a minor provincial Muslim organisation to something of a positive model for other Islamic groups across the country. The subsequent elections of other converts to Islam on the Executive Committee of the Association – Hall, Bollard, French and Shameem (see below) – further augmented this radical departure from the comparatively normative framework where the Muslim Associations were uniformly run by and for recent immigrants in the North Island. Throughout the 1980s, converts to Islam played a significant role in the administration of the Muslim Association of Canterbury. Another active participant in the formation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in the 1970s was Mansoor Ahmed Khawaja from Pakistan. Khawaja came to New Zealand in 1972 and moved to Christchurch in 1975, following his career in Statistics New Zealand. In 1981 he served as president of the Association. One more significant pioneer during this period was Muhammad Farouq Roy French, yet another local convert to Islam who maintained an appealing sense of humour and would become a popular pillar of the local Muslim community throughout the 1980s and 1990s.²⁴¹

The ongoing conundrum of evolving identity besets all migrants, both as individuals and in

²⁴⁰ Janine Bennetts, ‘Muslims abandon city mosque’, *PR*, 19 January 2007, p.A7.

²⁴¹ Mansoor Khawaja, ‘Masjid Al-Noor, Christchurch’, *Al Muslim*, 1984, p. 13.

terms of collective belonging, confounding the truism expressed within the popular cliché that insists that we all wear metaphorical masks.²⁴² One basic feature of the Muslim communal reality (and in contrast to many other New Zealand immigrants) was the fact of their being a marginal group in religious, racial, linguistic and cultural terms. This played out politically. Muslims exist in the shadows of a Christian or at least non-Muslim population majority, and under the authority of a deeply secular government that seldom gives religious considerations much thought in political decision-making despite strong cultural roots in Christianity. Religion not only offers answers many to urgent private and psychological needs, but also fulfils important social functions such as fostering group solidarity, providing a sense of historical continuity and purpose. Furthermore, it can alleviate an intense sense of isolation in an unfamiliar or depersonalised post-modern industrialised society. If, however, scholars write of communal or social marginalization the reader may then ask: where is the centre exactly; marginal for whom and by what standards? For Muslim immigrants, the mosque provides one of the few spaces inside this country where they constitute a clear and confident majority. Does theological and spatial propinquity draw folk together peacefully, or force them to confront differences head on? Marginalisation is, in many respects, entirely relative and open to a myriad of spirited subjective evaluations. The key question then arises of whether the Canterbury Muslim Association met any of its primary goals, and if so, how?

The Impact of Foreign Students

Throughout history people with very little in common have been inclined to rally together for a common cause, despite divergent interests and backgrounds, creating the façade of unity. The temporary union of foreign Muslim students and less formally educated resident Muslim immigrants demonstrates this point well. The first identifiable Muslim student in the South Island was Fiji Indian Abdul Habib Sahu Khan who enrolled at Otago University in 1938 and studied medicine.²⁴³ Other early Muslim students at Otago, Canterbury and Lincoln universities were Colombo Plan scholars from Malaysia and South East Asia, who started arriving from 1951 onwards. Curiously, despite all the documentation, there is some ambiguity here. One of the first Malaysian students was Abdullah bin Mohamed Yusof, who obtained a Bachelor of Engineering degree, in mining, with second class honours in 1956. Elsewhere the first Malaysian graduate is identified as Tan Sri Dato' Ahmad Azizuddin Bin

²⁴² Adis Duderija, 'Constructing the Religious Self and the Other: Neo-traditional Salafi *manhaj*', *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, Volume 21, Number 1, January 2010, 75–93; Adis Duderija, 'The Emergence of a Western Muslim Identity', *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, ed. R.Tottoli, (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp.198-213.

²⁴³ 'Dr Abdul Habib Sahu-Khan, M.B.E., M.B., Ch.B. (N.Z)', *The Hope Bulletin*, Volume 36 (December 2008), p. 8; Returning to Fiji, Dr Sahu Khan later served a term on the Legislative Council as an Indian nominated member from 1959 to 1963. He was a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.

Hj Zainal Abidin, who studied at Otago between 1951 and 1956. An Ahmad Azizudin is listed in the 1954 electoral rolls.²⁴⁴ Abidin also obtained a degree in mining and went on to forge a successful career inside Malaysia in administration, business and politics. He was granted an honorary doctorate from the University of Otago in 2001 and is currently Patron of that University's Alumni Association in Malaysia. Another early Muslim student from Malaysia was Abdul Rahim bin Abdul Jalal, who gained a Bachelor of Science degree in 1958.²⁴⁵

In 1963 the Dunedin-based Malaysian–Singapore Students Association was formed and this later led to the creation of the Otago Malaysian Students Association (OMSA). Over a decade later, in 1978, the Association affiliated itself to the Otago University Student Association (and has become one of the largest affiliates). The Otago Malaysian Students Association organised a variety of social activities and events and included Malaysians of non-Muslim faith groups as well (primarily Chinese and Indian). For example, in 2005 and 2006 it was the primary organiser of the Southeast Asian cultural nights. This earned the OMSA the 'Society of the Year' award from the OUSA in 2006 and again in 2010. The organisation has over the years provided many Malaysian Muslim students with an environment to gain experience in communal self-organisation that would play some part in the later formation of the Muslim University Students Association (MUSA) and the Otago Muslim Association (OMA). It is no surprise to see names cropping up in both (or more) lists of office bearers, for instance. Another prominent alumnus is Professor Datuk Mazlan Othman, the inaugural Director-General of Malaysia's National Space Agency, who studied at Otago from 1971 to 1980. The first woman to take a PhD in physics at Otago, Mazlan returned to Malaysia to become the country's first astrophysicist. The University of Otago awarded her the degree of Honorary Doctor of Science in 1997.²⁴⁶

One of the earliest identifiable Muslim students at Canterbury University was Khalil Mohammed from Fiji, who earned a B.A. in 1955. His thesis was later turned into a book, *The Sugar Industry in Fiji*, published by the University in 1962.²⁴⁷ Across New Zealand the 1960s saw a marked increase in the numbers of foreign students from South and South-East Asia that had started a decade earlier, particularly following the initiation of the Colombo Plan on 1 July 1951 and through the Commonwealth Scholarship (see below) that started in

²⁴⁴ 1954 Electoral District of Dunedin North (Stone, Son and Co.Ltd., Dunedin), August 1954, p.12.

²⁴⁵ 'A brief history of Muslims in Otago', *Rocket Science*, Mount Albert Islamic Trust, (November 2014), pp. 12-13.

²⁴⁶ 'A brief history of Muslims in Otago', *Rocket Science*, p. 13.

²⁴⁷ Khalil Mohammed, *The Sugar Industry in Fiji* (Christchurch: University of Canterbury Press, 1962).

1959. Originally the government envisioned that the programme would run from 1951 to 1957, and would adhere to two main goals: the economic development of the South and South-east Asian countries, and the provision of technical assistance to the region. The first beneficiaries of the scheme were often Muslims. On 8 November 1951 the Minister of External Affairs, Hon T. Clifton, announced that the first two Colombo Plan scholars, expected in 1952, would be Bintul Abbas and Mr. Ahmadul Kabir from Karachi.²⁴⁸ By May 1952 there were 47 scholars from Asia studying in New Zealand, two-thirds of them Muslim.²⁴⁹ The one-hundredth Colombo Plan scholar was Abdullah Din Sultan, a Malayan teacher, who studied adult education.²⁵⁰ The programme continued beyond 1957 and brought in a steady stream of international students, many of whom were Muslim. By 30 September 1958, a figure of 138 New Zealand technical assistance awards had been granted to students from the Federation of Malaya, out of a total of 571. Indonesia was the next highest beneficiary with 78 awards.²⁵¹ This meant a surge in students from South East Asia, the majority of whom were Muslim

The other programme through which large numbers of Muslim students came to New Zealand before the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in 1977 was the Commonwealth Scholarship that started in 1959. This scheme was much more selective and involved fewer student numbers in total. Muslim students were quick to socialise amongst themselves, across national lines (Malayan, Indian and so forth) and later with local resident Muslims. Socialisation with other non-Muslim students and New Zealanders was limited by dietary prohibitions against alcohol and non-halal foods, so Muslim students from various nationalities sometimes tended to socialise amongst themselves.

At some point in the early 1960s the Malaysian Students Association was organised in Canterbury and became very active, but details remain frustratingly scant and tantalizingly elusive.²⁵² However M. Ridswan's unpublished 1972 MA thesis entitled 'The Canterbury Malaysian Students Association' is worth examining here as I believe his assessments probably hold true for most Muslim students of the period.²⁵³ His research provides an intriguing insight into the experiences of Muslim students in New Zealand, and in Canterbury in particular, that might not otherwise be found or articulated. Ridswan identified

²⁴⁸ *External Affairs Review (EAR)*, Number 9 (December 1951), p. 3.

²⁴⁹ 'Colombo Plan: Statements by Minister of External Affairs', *EAR*, Volume II, Number 6, June 1952, p. 8.

²⁵⁰ '100th Colombo Plan Trainee', *EAR*, Volume III, Number 1, January 1953, p. 5.

²⁵¹ 'Colombo Plan', *EAR*, Volume VIII, Number 12, December 1958, p.9.

²⁵² Mohammed Yunus Noor 'A Study of the overseas Students in Christchurch', Unpublished Master's thesis (University of Canterbury, 1968).

²⁵³ M. Ridswan 'The Canterbury Malaysian Students Association', Unpublished Master's thesis (University of Canterbury, 1972), p. ii.

two main reasons that precluded Malaysian students from socialising with New Zealand students: firstly ‘an inherent shyness’, and secondly the broader cultural differences between Asians and Westerners. Fundamentally, and most interestingly, he observed that even amongst university educated Malaysians (that might presume to be a very Westernised group) ‘their general style of life and attitudes, their manners of expressions; eating and various other aspects of life are still basically traditional.’²⁵⁴ Many Muslim students in the South Island during this period went on to important careers in their homelands. For example when the Malaysian Director-General of Agriculture, Dato Abu Bakar, visited New Zealand in June 1990 to attend the World Agriculture Forum in Hamilton he took time ‘to renew contacts with old friends from his days as a student at Lincoln College in the late 1950s.’²⁵⁵

What is more challenging to determine is the precise role of these students within the wider nascent Muslim community of the South Island during this period (before the formal creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in 1977 and the Otago Muslim Association in 1994). After all, religious movements and organisations can be sparked into existence when a few random coincidences collide with a particular set of circumstances. One result of constant movement of South East Asian students to and from New Zealand throughout the 1950s and 1960s was that it both fed and sapped the overall Muslim minority of the only social class that might possibly have provided competent leadership at certain points and at the critical mass level. This feature could potentially leave the arena open to seriously incompetent demagogues with no knowledge of past affairs of the Muslim community or, more importantly, an ability to learn the lessons there from.

Around the late 1960s two Lincoln College graduate students also became active and increasingly important inside the Muslim community (and after 1977, the Association): Hanif Quazi and Osman Mahgoub Gaafar. Together they articulated a universal vision of Islam and a Muslim identity that emerged from their international backgrounds (and indeed the multi-ethnic nature of their respective societies), their heritage and their idealism. As a lay imam, Osman Gaafar was nicknamed the ‘Amir’ of Christchurch by some. Hanif Quazi arrived at Lincoln University in 1967. He later became an active teacher in the children’s Quran classes and contributed thoughtful articles to the newsletter of FIANZ (the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand) that not only discussed religion and Association affairs, but also took page space to briefly examine agricultural and scientific subjects from

²⁵⁴ M. Ridswan ‘The Canterbury Malaysian Students Association’, p. ii; Ridswan mentions an Association newsletter which is, alas, no longer extant. For a partial copy of the thesis introduction, see Appendix B.

²⁵⁵ ‘Visitors from South East Asia’, *New Zealand External Relations Review*, Volume 40, Number 3, April-June 1990, p. 28.

time to time.²⁵⁶ (Their departure would be sorely noted in the 1990s). Another university student from Malaysia (remembered only as Shazali within the vortex of collective memory) was especially active in acting as community a lay imam during the 1970s. Further information about him has proved elusive.²⁵⁷

Appointing a local man as ‘lay’ imam or mullah, or *mu’allim* (the Arabic word for teacher), for a basic level of domestic spiritual objectives, reflected the popular and communal aspect of Islam and Muslim worship. The advantage to engaging laypersons as *ulema* (Arabic for clergy) is that they were cheap (indeed, free) and entirely unconnected with any overseas agency or government. Theoretically the *Khatib* who delivered the *Khutbah* (sermon) invariably delivered it in the most widely understood language. In Auckland in the 1970s this was often Urdu, in Canterbury it was English. Strictly speaking, there is no sacerdotalism in Islam, no distinctive clergy *per se*, so early Muslim pioneers here could easily assert with some accuracy that they were returning to the customs and practices (the *Sunnah*) of early Islam. The ongoing disadvantage is that these men were often specialists in other areas – science, agriculture, architecture and so forth. Such pious and religious enthusiasts did not necessarily have a full grasp of the subtle complexities or the carefully studied nuances of the Quran, the Shariah and Islam as such, that they discussed in their sermons. They merely held a devout passion to preach on a subject they have studied in their spare time for years. At best they project an abstract, appealing and idealised perception of the faith that perhaps whitewashes or airbrushes a few minor inscrutable points here and there. At worst they can articulate a wildly anachronistic, misleading and un-obtainable semi-utopian vision that nobody can truly fulfil. This opened up an opportunity for some Muslims to criticize each other (unfairly) as poor in faith or deeds, not living up to the ‘true’ Islam, or even as *Munafiqun* (hypocrites).²⁵⁸

These lay imams usually delivered their *Khutbah* in English for obvious reasons – members of the Muslim community spoke several different languages and the Anglo-Saxon vernacular was the common *lingua franca* that all could comprehend and communicate in. Strictly speaking there are five simple integral components of the two-part *Khutbah* that must be said in classical or Quranic Arabic and between them these articulations should take no more than about two or three minutes to say:

1. Praising Allah ‘Alhamdulillah’ in both parts.

²⁵⁶ Ken Coates, ‘City mosque will promote understanding of Islam’, *The Press (PR)*, 30 January 1985, p. 15.

²⁵⁷ Private correspondence, author’s possession.

²⁵⁸ Private correspondence, author’s possession.

2. Blessings on the Prophet (Muhammad) in both parts.
3. Enjoining taqwa (fear of Allah) in both parts.
4. Recitation of one verse of the Qur'an in one part.
5. Making *dua* (prayer) for believers for their *akhirah* (afterlife) in the second part of the Khutbah.

Ideally, the rest of the sermon must be in the local language to ensure the maximum 'gain' from the wider congregation and should be delivered in stentorian tones.

Although this is not the time or place to examine the issue in depth, there is a nebulous religious sentiment diffused across many Muslim societies that has been increasingly heard inside New Zealand after 1979, neatly summed up in Toynbee's expression 'archaistic mentality'.²⁵⁹ This is the mindset or articulation that harps back to a poorly understood (indeed semi-mythical) conceptualisation of an imaginary Golden Age of Islam. Such fantasies often take on ideological frameworks and paradigms, and have little bearing on reality but are nonetheless frequently popular for the simple reason that (like Communist and other semi-messianic religious propaganda) they appear or claim to have all the answers to life's complicated vicissitudes in absurdly simple verbal formulas (often a quick quote from the Quran, more often a Hadith) or overly simplistic proposals ('the only constitution a Muslim Association needs is the Quran' is a popular one).

From 1964 to 1966 a Muslim Association was established in Wellington (laboriously entitled the International Muslim Association of New Zealand and known by the acronym IMAN). There were many foreign students from South East Asia there too, and connections with the embassies. IMAN was able to provide South Island Muslims with Qurans, Islamic literature, and assistance with prayer and Eid timetables. The early 1970s witnessed a spike in Muslim Malay and South East Asian students attending Canterbury University and Lincoln College. This period also saw the immigration of ten Shia Ismailis, mostly refugees from Uganda. They were never active in the Muslim Association, apart from periodic attendance at Eid celebrations. However one such Ismaili, named Mohamed Panjwani who died in 1977, was in fact the first Muslim buried in the newly opened Islamic burial plot at the Ruru Lawn Cemetery.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ Arnold J. Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Abridgement of Volumes I-VI, Somerville D.C. (London: Oxford University Press, 1946), pp.375-376.

²⁶⁰ William Shepard, 'Muslims in New Zealand', *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Volume 4, Numbers. 1 & 2 (1982), p. 72.

Mosque Building in Canterbury

John L. Esposito describes a mosque as ‘the most distinctive form of Islamic architecture’ and explains that it ‘indicates the presence of a Muslim community’.²⁶¹ Humans usually want to see some sort of physical manifestation of their faith. Abstract theologies are personally re-assuring but ultimately Muslims in Canterbury wanted to pray not just together but inside their own clearly demarcated sacred space. In the 1970s, as discussed, there was a growing need in Canterbury to arrange a regular place for prayers and by July 1979 the Muslim Association of Canterbury had managed to raise approximately \$3000 for a mosque or Islamic Centre. On 27 November 1980 the Association purchased an old two bedroom house at 534 Tuam Street in Phillipstown, central Christchurch, for \$80,000. The house needed a little redecorating but the South Island now had a place for the compulsory Friday congregational prayers and genuflections.²⁶² The Phillipstown house was sold on 24 December 2002 for \$60,000 during the time when Muhammed Khalifa Al Hasi from Libya was president of the Muslim Association of Canterbury.²⁶³

Soon after the acquisition of the property the Association received and welcomed its first official international visitor when Maulana Abdul Salam Rahmani, an *Amir* with the *Tablighi Jamaat* in Fiji, toured Christchurch and visited the Islamic Centre in early March 1981.²⁶⁴ Based briefly in Wellington, the peripatetic Maulana was also in New Zealand to attend the annual *Tablighi Jamaat* Auckland *Ijtema* (annual gathering) over Easter weekend in April that year.²⁶⁵ The *Tablighi Jamaat* need not detain us much here as their activity in the South Island was minimal at the time period under examination. Active inside New Zealand since 1969 it is a grassroots lay-persons movement inside the world of Islam, originating in India in the 1920s and emphasizing the strict necessity of following one particular interpretation of the *Sunnah* (customs) of the Prophet Muhammed. If sartorial fashion is a collision and collusion of Art and Commerce then members of the *Tablighi Jamaat* rather boldly state their faith by dressing for seventh century Arabia and wearing turbans, sandals and robes in public and on a daily basis, not merely at the mosque on Fridays or at Eid functions. Self-consciously anachronistic and outdated garb serves them as a badge of identity. It marks them not only from the wider non-Muslim general public but

²⁶¹ Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, p. 24.

²⁶² Mansoor Khawaja, ‘Masjid Al-Noor, Christchurch’, 1984, p. 13.

²⁶³ Matt Philp, ‘Mosque Woes’, *PR*, 6 May 2006, pp. D1-2.

²⁶⁴ ‘Maulana Abdul Salam Rahmani, Representative Darul Iftah in Fiji, is on a fact-finding mission in New Zealand at present.’ (sic) *Al Muslim*, February 1981, p. 3.

²⁶⁵ Notoriously hard to translate, *Tabligh* means to convey a message or divine revelation, whilst *Jamaat* simply means congregation or gathering. The title *Tablighi Jamaat* has no immediate English translation and therefore signifies something like ‘society to revitalise faith’. It is a distinctly Indian Arabic term rather than vernacular or classical Arabic. See: John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp.309-310.

also from other Muslims. Thus ignoring entirely the dictum *Cucullus non facit monachum* (a cowl does not make the man a monk), they are also distinguished from other Muslims by insisting male participants grow beards, adopt a variety of traditional baggy Third World fashions, and spend much time travelling and preaching their understanding of the religion.

The Phillipstown house soon became too small for the growing number of Muslims and converts to Islam. The Association staged formal and informal discussion throughout 1982 and 1983 to establish the community's future requirements. In early 1982 the Association purchased a quadrilateral property for \$80,000 on Deans Avenue, inside the Riccarton Borough and at the time outside Christchurch City.²⁶⁶ The property itself contained stables for horses and a stable shed for harnesses and equipment. Negotiations began with the Borough Council immediately to build some sort of proper mosque. The area was suburban and surrounded in part by middle class houses, and had been so for decades. Curiously the Muslim Association never sought to buy up any of the neighbouring land when it was available, even if only to widen the existing site. There is no entirely satisfactory explanation for why the mosque itself was ultimately built so close to the road, leaving two-thirds of the plot empty and idle at the rear of the property, with only limited car parking space in the front and only a limited narrow access (just a little over four metres wide) to the back section. It is still very much a moot question whether the horse stables could have been removed over 1983 / 1984 and the mosque erected further into the property, opening up the front space for other uses. From time to time this rather expansive back section (approximately 1640 sq metres) has been utilized for car parking or tents erected to cater for Eid festivals and so forth. However the exceptionally narrow access invariably leads to congestion problems. It is difficult to elucidate the motivation to locate the mosque on the property thus, except that there is an ongoing problem with the average ground level of the back section being below the kerb level storm water runoff by a gradient of about 4%. This means that the rear section sometimes floods and creates small ponds. Ideally the entire property should have been landscaped so that water could run into sump holes and although plans were approved towards this direction in 2009, the Association baulked at the costs at the last minute.²⁶⁷

On Monday, 10 May 1982, the Riccarton Borough Council approved a formal proposal from the Association to build a mosque there. The Mayor of Riccarton, Mr R. W. J. Harrington, welcomed this move and 'suggested that the mosque might even become a tourist

²⁶⁶ 'Masjid Al-Noor', *The Muslim (N.Z.)*, Volume 3 (1), June 1985, p. 32.

²⁶⁷ Private correspondence, author's possession.

attraction.²⁶⁸ Most likely the key issue for the Council was the desire to appear unbiased or religiously impartial, rather than sympathetic to a physical vestige of Islam itself. A convert to Islam, Martin 'Rasjid' Wallen, was deliberately chosen by the Association management to design the mosque. Born in Australia in 1938 Wallen had come to Christchurch in 1965, and left in 1988. Almost all great learning occurs in groups (since collaboration, interaction and occasional rivalry is the essence of intellectual and artistic growth) so together with another convert, Abdul Hadi Bollard, they travelled to Malaysia, meeting with government representatives there and staying at a Hajj hostel. The two men traversed Malaysia on buses, taking photographs and meeting lots of local folk. Upon returning to Kuala Lumpur they interviewed a Malay architect and determined the important points of mosque design. Keeping in mind the point that artistic creativity is the process of manifesting original ideas that contain value, Wallen decided that the key structural feature would be to build in pre-cast tilt slab (solid concrete) because it was felt that the mosque building would last a long time.²⁶⁹

The stylistic diversity of contemporary religious architecture in the Canterbury region mirrors to some extent rival spiritual traditions, claims and visions of monotheism, and Wallen brought in the extensive use of local timber and surprisingly cathedral-like windows that still possessed an Islamic design stencilled onto the glass. The barbeque area was another feature unique in the design of mosques in the South Pacific, reflecting the desire to integrate local culinary customs. Generally speaking he designed a utilitarian structure that could be used with many facility options such as a space of a library or children's study room and the women's prayer hall. Overall the structure was certainly not designed or erected with any particularly novel or excitingly bold architectural ideas or features, and whilst not ugly, the aesthetics of the mosque exterior was clearly of marginal concern. The building itself was made to accommodate nearly 300 people at prayer inside the building itself (not to mention space for extra worshippers to pray on rugs and mats in the expansive courtyard to the north side of the structure). His architectural plans provided approximately 1.5 square meters per person, with a maximum floor space to allow for 290 worshippers. In 1981 there were 465 Muslims inside the Canterbury Statistical Area and the Association fully expected numbers to grow.²⁷⁰ There followed a year of serious fundraising both at home and abroad. This largely involved local Muslims visiting other local Muslims to start with, then visiting Muslims in other regions and abroad, in ever increasing circles.

²⁶⁸ 'Riccarton mosque request granted', *PR*, 11 May 1982, p. 6.

²⁶⁹ Mansoor Khawaja, 'Masjid Al-Noor, Christchurch', *Al Muslim*, 1984, p. 13.

²⁷⁰ *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1976. Volume 3 - Religious Professions*, p.19; *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings, 1981. Volume 3 - Religious Professions*, pp.10-12.

On 24 May 1982 the Borough Council finally approved Wallen's architectural plans but there was now a marked change in tone from the Council. Councillor D. A. Anderson told the meeting the council had no real power to reject the application by the Canterbury Muslim Association Inc. Cr R. S. Lester agreed that although he could 'not raise a true objection' to the proposal, he did not think this 'type of development' added to the aesthetics of the area.²⁷¹ We may assume to some degree that beyond a few mildly curious newspaper articles, the impact of the *Masjid Al-Noor* in Canterbury at the time was limited to the local Muslim minority. There is no evidence of interest from either the government agencies or municipal authorities, or from other faith communities (future research may disprove this point though), who appear to have made no effort to report in their paperwork on the aims of Islam developing here. So the process and experience of mosque construction in the urban space of Christchurch appears to have been underpinned only by a political concern for administrative transparency and a sentiment of mixed feelings with regard to other faiths that are more recognizable in New Zealand.

On 12 June the following year the foundation stone was formally laid during Ramadan. Fundraising continued and the Association was blessed by the presence of three Saudi university students. These three utilised their various contacts inside the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to raise funds for the project. Salih Al Samahy, who came to New Zealand under a medical fellowship, in particular is credited and remembered by the community for his particular devotion to this venture. It is understood that he devoted a lot of his personal time to telephoning and contacting folk in Arabia, and visiting in person on his periodic trips home, in order to secure money and goodwill. 'Dr Al Samahy was taken by the Canterbury Area Health Board as a trainee surgeon in 1981. The Medical Council says Dr Al Samahy has a degree in medicine from the King Faisal University.'²⁷² Al Samahy was in his late thirties when he arrived in Christchurch in late 1980 and was engaged at Christchurch hospital. Ironically perhaps he resided in the suburb of Cashmere – not far from where Wuzerah settled – with his wife Munira and their two children. The family home was apparently something of a drop-in centre for many Muslims and the doctor was very involved in community affairs. His personal efforts led directly to a myriad of scholarships being offered to local Muslims to study overseas and he also arranged a domestic scholarship for the daughter of one Maori convert to attend Rangi Ruru School. The generous Saudi was considered by some to be the unofficial Saudi Ambassador to New Zealand and he contributed personally to many causes such as the start-up of the initial library project for the

²⁷¹ 'Mosque plans approved', *PR*, 25 May 1982, p. 6.

²⁷² Cate Brett, 'Hospital claim by Saudi, say police', *The Christchurch Star (CS)*, 29 December 1989, p. 3.

Islamic Federation, also paying for several youth camps. He bought a car to transport Muslim children from Lincoln to the *Masjid Al-Noor* every Sunday. Al Samahy is also credited with a substantial donation (to the mosque fundraising project) amounting to over US\$300,000, separate from the later donation by *Rabitah al-Alam al-Islami*, (see below).²⁷³

An older generation of Muslims in Canterbury remember him fondly and suggest he was also a close friend of several local civic and social leaders. His influence and reach extended beyond Canterbury. In 1989 he was the only South Island Muslim appointed to the newly created FIANZ Trust Board alongside Mazhar Krasniqi, Dr Khalid Sandhu and Abdul Rahim Rasheed.²⁷⁴ Furthermore when the Iranian embassy celebrated Milad-un-Nabi (birthday of the prophet) at the Wellington Islamic Centre in Newtown, in October 1989, Al Samahy fired off a long missive to Javed Iqbal Khan (president of the Wellington Muslim community) reminding him that it was the Federation's policy not to allow or encourage any celebration or festivities relating to Milad-un-Nabi at any Islamic Centre or mosque inside New Zealand.²⁷⁵ In any event Salih Al Samahy failed the Medical Council's probationary registration examination early in 1989.²⁷⁶ He returned Saudi Arabia in 1990 where he was appointed to a very senior medical post but suffered a heart attack in August and died soon after.

In July 1984 a contract for the construction of the mosque was finally signed between the Muslim Association and M. L. Paynter Ltd. Two months later the Australia-based Saudi Ambassador, Dr Alohalay, took time to visit Christchurch during an official tour of New Zealand by the Saudi Minister of Petroleum & Mineral Resources, Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani, who was visiting as a guest of the New Zealand government. In Christchurch the Ambassador participated in another foundation stone laying project and took the opportunity to formally present the Association with a generous cheque of \$460,000 from the kingdom for the mosque project. The FIANZ Newsletter reported: 'The Masjid is built with donations from overseas mainly from our brethren in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Bahrain with the efforts of our brother Saleh Samahy.'²⁷⁷ As local builders and the architect Wallen compete, vie and negotiate with these supra-national Islamic influences and themes, it is worth

²⁷³ *Islam: An Introduction*, (Christchurch: Muslim Association Canterbury, 1986), p.11.

²⁷⁴ 'FIANZ News', *Al Muslim*, Number 4, 1989, p. 11.

²⁷⁵ The Milad-un-Nabi service need not detain us overly here. The Milad (Arabic: *Mawlid*) is a very popular folk festival celebrated across the Muslim world internationally. However there is no evidence that the prophet Muhammad or his companions ever observed the date and several conservative elements within Islam, such as Wahhabism and the *Tablighi Jamaat*, have advocated against it. In the absence of clear or authoritative leadership, it has been an ongoing source of dispute inside New Zealand mosques since the 1980s.

²⁷⁶ Cate Brett, 'Hospital claim by Saudi, say police', *CS*, 29 December 1989, p. 3.

²⁷⁷ 'Masjid Al-Noor', *The Muslim (N.Z.)*, Volume 3 (1), June 1985, p. 32.

recalling that there are no established styles (i.e. specifically Indian, Arab, Ottoman etc.) for mosque architecture in New Zealand, so that to some extent Canterbury was basically a clean slate for local and global perspectives.

A mosque has both visual and tactile qualities. The French art historian and archaeologist Oleg Grabar has written that, within Islamic artistic traditions, ‘inscriptions replaced the figurative imagery’ employed in other architectural customs and styles, and that regardless of their ornamental role such inscriptions are often very ‘indicative of the purposes of a building or the kind of meanings which were at one time attributed to it.’²⁷⁸ Osman Mahgoub Gaafar from Sudan specially prepared the Arabic calligraphy decorating the architrave above the walls inside the main prayer hall, the library and the ladies room of the mosque. An interpolation on the potent symbolism and the suggestive imagery of this calligraphy is worth examining here as the interior of the mosque stands as more than just a vibrant example of creative genius where art meets practicality. Spaced approximately one metre apart, the Arabic inscription repeats the *Shahadah* or Testament of faith in Islam: *La ‘ilaha ‘illa l-Lah, Mu’ammad rasulu l-Lah* (There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God). Also visible inside the spacious main prayer hall top are four corner windows – clerestories – where the dome rests on the ceiling beams. These four modest windows are about one metre wide and two metres high, and bear the Arabic calligraphic engravings extracted from Surah al-Jinn, Verse 18: *Wa anna al-masajida lillahi falaa tada’u ma’a Allahi ahada* (And the mosques are for Allah so invoke not anyone along with Allah). The particular Arabic calligraphic script employed is called ‘Thuluth Modern’, which was popularised during (and often associated with) the Ottoman-Turkish empire period. It is indeed customary for Quranic verses to be inscribed in prominent places inside the mosque but are these mnemonic verses narratives or directives? They are certainly intended primarily for Muslims – who should all have some knowledge of written Quranic Arabic.

These discreet gems reveal a lot about the communal values of the period. Such monophonic words gave Muslims at prayer ideas to carry in the mind, together with the sermons they heard, that worship must be directed to Allah (God) alone. There are no figurative images inside the mosque as there is no fear of blank spaces inside religious buildings in Islam. Outside observers often comment on the Spartan decoration inside and outside. Of all the traditional customs, values and arts that Muslim immigrants brought to these shores over the past one hundred years, Quranic script and calligraphy has a unique ability to not only relay instructions for the edification of souls, but also to convey and elucidate the top priorities of the evolving Muslim minority at that point in time. Whilst religious scriptures that had

²⁷⁸ Oleg Grabar, *The Alhambra*, (London: Allen Lane, 1978), p. 100.

seemed somehow increasingly redundant within Western Society with the rise of secularism, now possess a renewed status as immigrants from outside this cultural orbit bring new value to the printed word and discreetly challenge the accepted dominant social norms. Originally all the other glass windows, throughout the building, featured repeating geometric patterns. (Although over the years some have been damaged and replaced with clear non-decorative glass). An ability to read a building is a skill and the mosque itself is also a testament to the rare combination of New Zealand industrial talents and craftsmanship, plus sophisticated Islamic architectural ideas and themes.

Grabar identified three different types of inscriptions worth our attention here. Firstly there are ‘informative inscriptions’ that provide concrete data such as the time of the monuments construction or the name of the builder and so forth. Secondly there are ‘redundant inscriptions’. These are formulas that are repeated *ad nauseam* throughout the building. These are often dismissed as pious articulations but they give us crucial information about the values and priorities of the architect and builders, the patrons and the population it was intended for. Lastly there are ‘iconographic inscriptions’. Like the redundant inscriptions, these are rigorously repeated formulas but here they are most often extracted from the Quran and specifically chosen to stress some special point or purpose that is not *a priori* obvious to the non-Muslim observer. It is significant that there are no other inscriptions on the *Masjid Al-Noor*, and that also the verbal inscriptions that are present are both strictly Quranic and placed high. Observers and worshippers must look up both physically and figuratively to appreciate the information they provide. The building exterior was painted white with a green dome. White is a traditional colour for mosques worldwide (and indeed many religious structures) because it symbolises purity and cleanliness, and the illuminating clarity of light (Arabic: *Noor* or *Nur*, hence the title *Masjid Al-Noor* or the mosque of light). Green is often, although not always, selected for two significant reasons. Firstly, it is allegedly the Prophet Muhammad’s favourite colour. Secondly, harping back to the traditions of folk who live in drier climates, green is associated with the life-giving and desirable vegetation of gardens – and hence paradise (*Jannah*). The dome was repainted yellow for no apparent reason in 2003.

In 1989 the Riccarton Borough was amalgamated into Christchurch City and over the 1990s and 2000s expensive town houses were built around the slender rectangle band of mosque property making future acquisition of any such properties increasingly unlikely or at least prohibitively expensive.

‘Asabiyyah in the South Island?

A question may be raised as to the depth and longevity of the then newly articulated solidarity. Many overseas students returned to their home countries and many new migrants and refugees transferred on to Australia (where mosques are usually more ethnically focused and monocultural). Was this but a temporary spiritual alignment in contrast to an acknowledgement of a deeply rooted and common bond or identity? Or was it the outward manifestation of an innate religiosity? Muslim communal consensus and unity was slow to develop both in Canterbury and across New Zealand, and often exhibited a curious circumstantiality (wherein communications, such as those expressed in community newsletters or community meetings, exhibit excessive attention to irrelevant and digressive details such as the precise manner in which the Prophet Muhammad ate grapes or wore his turban for example). Possibly such discourse evolved from the convergence of migrants and refugees from various lands with differing ideas about Islam who were obliged to find common ground in an unfamiliar language (English) with little or no outside (or ‘clerical’) aid. Under such circumstances real issues arise over who determines communal and private priorities and how this is undertaken. Pratt reminds us: ‘Islamic identity is grounded within community.’²⁷⁹ Creating a community relying on differing interpretations of an ancient and widespread religion posed unique challenges. Ethical and moral doctrines in the Islamic belief system are closely tied into notions of law (that have no legal application inside New Zealand) and there is no particular demarcation between the rules of religious ritual and the rules of conduct between members of a society. This makes the bifurcation between civil and criminal and religious laws all that much harder to tease out coherently. Examined from another angle Muslims, in Canterbury, indeed New Zealand, epitomize a religious minority in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Their minority status is qualitative because it is characterised by asymmetrical power relations. The evolution and creation of national and municipal public policies related to the erection of the mosque provide an interesting medium or lens through which to study how the host environment attempts to normalise and regulate the presence of Islam.

Was the Muslim response a case of ‘*asabiyyah*’ in the sense of a growing Islamic communal cohesion? This is an interesting point that needs teasing out. The Muslim political philosopher Muhammad Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) maintained that ‘*asabiyyah*’ itself was the ‘primal social glue’ that bound Muslim community units together successfully.²⁸⁰ The concept ‘*asabiyyah*’ is usually interpreted in a negative light in modern parlance and

²⁷⁹ Pratt, *The Challenge Of Islam: Encounters in Interfaith Dialogue* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2005), p. 138.

²⁸⁰ Allen James Fromherz, *Ibn Khaldun, Life and Times* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 128.

discourse because it is associated, especially in Muslim-majority societies, with abject partisanship and tribalism. However, in Khaldun's book *Muqaddimah* it evokes less the notion of real blood ties or dynastic clan politics in the modern sense, rather it resembles more the idea of group loyalty and has been compared to the philosophical republicanism of the classical era.²⁸¹ Muslim immigrants and students (and indeed converts to Islam) in Canterbury during the 1970s and 1980s came from a wide variety of countries and yet managed to forge a degree of group consciousness and a shared sense of direction. In some respects there were perhaps overlapping degrees of '*asabiyyah*. For instance Malaysian students came together with Malays from Singapore and Muslims from Indonesia for the simple reason that their languages and cultures are very similar (some might argue indistinguishable). All three come from different legal entities with differing laws yet with some loosely shared points of history, and mutually intelligible languages. Similarly, Indians from India proper came together with ethnic Indians from Fiji as well as Bangladeshis and Pakistanis, with Hindi and Urdu as a shared *lingua franca*. Both South Asian and South-East Asian Muslims came together in a common pan-Muslim bond (with a few Africans and local Pakeha converts) to create the Muslim Association. Arab Muslims too, from Saudi Arabia to Egypt and Sudan, came together in Canterbury across national and regional lines. Clearly a broad conceptualization of Islam in this period did form a type of '*asabiyyah*.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to examine the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in the 1970s, the role of Muslim students from abroad, to sketch the construction details of the first purpose built mosque in the South Island, and question the role of '*asabiyyah* during this period. Architecture has continuously shaped society as it defines civilisation and often reinforces hierarchy. However some degree of necessity led the Canterbury Muslim minority to new solutions designed for a functional future in the design and erection of their mosque.

Two factors played a significant role over the 1960s and 1970s that led to the creation of the Muslim Association. Firstly, there was an increasing number of foreign Muslim students. Secondly, and arguably more importantly, there was an increasing number of permanent Muslim residents. It is important not to forget that the challenges Muslims wrestled with in the 1970s (and that are in some ways still present): the dynamic of a burgeoning and largely itinerant Muslim minority in an ostensibly Christian or even post-Christian (decidedly Western) cultural framework. This makes the creation of the regional Muslim Association all the more interesting. Inside the Association there was always an elected leader of some

²⁸¹ Fromherz, *Ibn Khaldun, Life and Times*, pp. 2-3, 29-30.

capacity or talent and the canny perception of the leaders of the Canterbury's Muslims in this period was to comprehend immediately the multiple risks and difficulties to be encountered in trying to forge a new socio-religious communal identity. Clearly key individuals such as Mohamed Kara and Salih Al Samahy made a substantial difference in the evolution of the Muslim community during this era.

Within ten years of its creation the Muslim Association of Canterbury had obtained an Islamic Centre and even erected the first purpose-built mosque in the South Island. This is in radical contrast to events in the North Island where Muslim communities (via several Associations) took decades to accomplish such goals. These South Island facts are important and significant because they did not happen anywhere else in New Zealand in this manner.

CHAPTER FIVE

Continuity and Change, Diversity and Tensions

Introduction

The last chapter discussed the firm emergence of a new religious community in Canterbury, a legally registered entity functioning within the framework of New Zealand law, and thus the creation of a comparatively novel association for communal Islamic worship. The aim of this chapter is to provide a broad outline of the expansive momentum that emerged and deployed social and spiritual means to forge, secure and maintain Islam in Canterbury. It will also discuss briefly new tensions that arose when old conceptualisations of faith and religious authority were reconfigured or usurped, when traditional links and ties of patronage and obligation were undermined, weakened or simply lapsed. The chapter is made up of three sections. To begin with I will examine what happened after the Muslim Association built the first mosque in the South Island. What were the priorities and focus? The following section will provide an overview of the evolving community tensions that arose in the late 1980s, and carried on into the 1990s, that in many respects contrasted with the simple piety of earlier Muslim migration experiences. Penultimately, I will study the fluctuating issues around theological allegiance and overseas Islamic literature. This chapter will conclude that it was partly this momentum that constituted the new Muslim community and sustained its distinct historical identity in an ever evolving repertoire of ritual, doctrinal possibilities. It was a regime of adaptation, innovation and adjustment, very specific to time and place. Certain elements were stressed (Dawah and the notion of *'asabiyyah* for example) and firmed up to become communal features and characteristics.

Dawah and the Mosque

During 1984 and 1985 the first purpose-built mosque in the South Island was erected on Deans Avenue in Christchurch. Initially the Canterbury Muslim migrant community responded to the formal Association with enthusiasm, and the 1980s was a period for Dawah. There was a sustained effort to explain Islam to the wider Canterbury population, with the discreet objective of encouraging conversions to the faith and thus enlarging the community.²⁸² However the community and the Association contained core internal challenges and tensions that would emerge later.

²⁸² For a useful analysis of the theological framework for conversion to Islam, see: Yasin Dutton, 'Conversion to Islam: The Qur'anic Paradigm,' eds. Christopher Lamb and M. Darrol Bryant, *Religious Conversion: Contemporary Practices and Controversies* (London: Cassell, 1999), pp. 151–65.

The Deans Avenue mosque quickly became the hub of Islamic activities catering for a very wide spectrum of Muslims and non-Muslims, not only in Christchurch but across the entire South Island. The first international Islamic Dawah Youth Conference in New Zealand was staged between Monday to Saturday, 13 to 18 May 1985, before the mosque building itself was completed. This conference was organised by the Muslim Association and held at Canterbury University and was attended by over 150 students from the South Pacific, the Middle East, South East Asia and North America. The event was sponsored by FIANZ (the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand) and the Saudi charity World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY). The key-note speech as that of Palestine-born Ismail Raji Al Faruqi, director of the Institute of Islamic Thought in Washington D.C., USA. As part of the programme delegates visited the construction site.²⁸³ An extensive report by Silvana Mahmic, an Australian-Bosnian Muslimah, featured in the Australian Muslim community newsletter entitled the *Australian Minaret*.²⁸⁴

On Sunday 25 August 1985 work on the mosque was finally completed and the keys were officially handed over to Association president Hanif Quazi by Mr Gordon Exton, the manager of the construction company M. L. Paynter.²⁸⁵ The new building obviated the need to find or provide makeshift prayer locations (such as hiring halls) and the Association itself quickly utilised the mosque for Dawah. Links were established with the local Teachers College and arrangements made for all secondary school teachers to visit the mosque. Furthermore there was a concerted and deliberate effort during this period, the 1980s, not only to explain Islam in the simplest sense of Dawah, but also to actively engage the converts that came in. This meant including them in community affairs, the decision making processes and so forth, and even led some into the Executive Committee managing the Association and the mosque.

Later in the year a two-day symposium (29-30 November) was held to mark the occasion, attended by many FIANZ delegates. Quazi told the audience that Hajji Muhammad Nasser Al Aboudi, secretary-general of the Muslim World League (*Rabitah Al Alam Al Islami*), had played a significant role in raising funds for the mosque that the Muslim Association of Canterbury management hoped would serve as a bastion of action and the dissemination of

²⁸³ 'News line: Young Muslims to meet in Chch', *The Press (PR)*, 8 May 1985, p. 16; 'Chapel Becomes a Mosque', *CS*, 14 May 1985, p. 28; 'Islamic Youth Meet', *PR*, 15 May 1985, p. 8.

²⁸⁴ Silvana Mahmic, 'Australian Muslims attend Youth Da'wah Camp in New Zealand', *Australian Minaret* (September-October 1985), p. 6.

²⁸⁵ Untitled, *PR*, 26 August 1985, p. 2.

Islam in the South Island.²⁸⁶ The universal religion theme was endorsed by the president of FIANZ, Dr Khalid R. Sandhu, of Wellington, in his address:

We live in a multi-cultural society in New Zealand and each of us should contribute to this society as a whole. But we can only do this if we keep our own culture intact. We have come through a colonial period where Islam has been projected in a negative fashion; a period in which everyone was speaking about Islam except the Muslims.²⁸⁷

In May 1986 the Association organised a weekend of activities and the first ever mosque Open Day. The highlight of the event was a week-long photographic exhibition arranged by Omar Hill, another local convert to Islam, featuring the plight of the valiant Mujahedeen in Afghanistan. Garry Miller, a Canadian scholar also known as Abdul-Ahad Omar, was the guest of honour and opened a symposium on Islam and Christianity.²⁸⁸ Three months later the Association organised the first ever weeklong Islamic Art and Calligraphy Exhibition in New Zealand, starting on Saturday 23 August, inside the mosque library. The mosque was, after all, unique in the South Island and an excellent example of public Muslim architecture or 'Saracenic Art'. This was specifically arranged to coincide with the Christchurch Arts Festival and there was also a public forum staged on 25 August where Jamal Al Badawi and Maneh Al Johani, secretary-general of WAMY, gave speeches about Islam. The art exhibition and an interview with G. I. Abdul Razaq Khan featured on a very popular national television series *Kaleidoscope* broadcast a few weeks later on 26 September.²⁸⁹

In May 1987 FIANZ announced plans to launch an Islamic Resource and Information Centre based at the Canterbury mosque. This was actually an initiative of G. I. Abdul Razaq Khan and the aim was to establish a national resource library in the room adjacent to the *Masjid Al-Noor* main prayer hall with a broad catalogue of books, audio tape cassettes and videos. Khan and a Malaysian student named Mahmud Hashamuddin prepared 2000 copies of a brochure outlining the catalogue and distributed these among the regional Muslim Associations. The idea was that Muslim folk across the land could borrow and return quality Islamic literature and so forth, by mail. Apparently the system worked for about a year before material started to disappear: books and tapes were not being returned. Curiously at

²⁸⁶ Aboudi was also author of the 1984 publication *Itlalah a'la Nehayat Al-a'alam Al-Janoobi* (A View of the Ends of the Southern World) detailing his tour of the North Island of New Zealand and Tasmania in 1982.

²⁸⁷ 'Mosque's Keys Handed Over', *PR*, 30 November 1985, p. 8.

²⁸⁸ 'Photos show fighters', *PR*, 17 May 1986, p. 8.

²⁸⁹ Untitled, *PR*, 22 August 1986, p. 1.

the end of the year two Muslim students were employed with the Herculean task of perusing through every telephone book in order to prepare a massive list of every identifiable Muslim name and address. Later every Association and every such address was sent a copy of the catalogue brochure. Once again the costs were apparently borne by Salih Al Samahy, a Christchurch based medical student from Saudi Arabia.²⁹⁰

In April 1988 FIANZ held its first ever South Island AGM at the mosque. Salih Al Samahy was elected the first ever South Island president of the Islamic Federation (also the first Arab to hold the post). Over the weekend of 30-31 July 1988 the first (and last) National FIANZ workshop was held at the new mosque and over 50 Muslim men and women from across New Zealand, including Mazhar Krasniqi (the inaugural FIANZ president in 1979), met to discuss and explore business opportunities and revenue ideas. They focused on economic self-sufficiency objectives and priorities. In 1989 one of the Christchurch-based FIANZ Dawah activists G. I. Abdur Razzaq Khan could write in the *Al Muslim* that twenty-three Dawah camps and gatherings had been organised over the past six years and that 88 Muslim youth had been sent abroad for further Dawah training. Over 11,000 items of Islamic literature had been distributed (presumably of foreign press) and that numerous interviews with, and documentaries on, local Muslims had been broadcast of New Zealand television and radio. 'FIANZ has arranged for 18 educational scholarships both here in NZ and overseas. We have also assisted with financial help to very needy students.'²⁹¹ In 1989 the National Islamic Information Centre was still functioning from the Canterbury mosque but after that point the exact developments fade into obscurity as new leaders came in during the 1990s and some degree of continuity was lost. What happened precisely to the remaining resources is vague. Most probably ended up being incorporated into the mosque library or taken home by avid readers.²⁹²

It would be a serious mistake to assume that because devout Muslims are disciplined readers and listeners with regard to the Quran, and that because there were many tertiary students in the community, they would automatically perform well academically. There are two issues here. Firstly a lifetime of learning to read and recite the Quran does possibly give some Muslim students a small edge in learning to memorise and repeat information. However it does not facilitate the critical scrutiny of such information. Additionally the message of Islam emphasizes spirituality. Faith in God and hard work takes precedence over an articulated comprehension of Newtonian Physics or a deep appreciation of Shakespearean

²⁹⁰ Jenni McManus, 'Islamic Base to Expand Export Links', *National Business Review (NBR)*, 15 May 1987, p. 3; 'News Circular', FIANZ, May-June 1987, pp. 1-3.

²⁹¹ 'FIANZ in Brief', *The Muslim*, Number 3, 1989, p. 7.

²⁹² 'FIANZ News', *The Muslim*, Number 4, 1989, p. 10.

loquaciousness. Islamic organisations and literature unequivocally stress preparation for the *akhirah* (afterlife) rather than the accumulation of wealth or knowledge in the *dunya* (the world, in a materialist sense). The systematic exposition and interpretative analysis of information is seldom either a primary goal or indeed, even necessary. This point is especially so if such knowledge disturbs the believers' notion of God or faith. Spiritual wealth is perceived as superior to material wealth or empirical evidence, and family is paramount over career. At another level some Islamic literature provides readers with little more than ontological mystification that distracts as much as it informs. Hence the ongoing absence on any in-depth historical research or elucidation within the Muslim minority itself.

Interestingly all the Qurans and Islamic literature that entered the Muslim Association library were donated from abroad, and there was at this point no effort – apart from the FIANZ newsletter – to print or publish local booklets or books on Islam (i.e. localised perspectives and so forth). Consequently the Islamic reading corpus available was – and remains – often drawn from totally different *Madhhab* and contained curiously different perspectives. Ultimately the same shelf might well contain an English language translation of the classic Wahhabi book *Kitab al-Tawhid* by Shaykh Muhammad Ibn ‘Abd al Wahhab right beside its ideological counterpoint *The Excellence of Meelad-un-Nabi*. (Later in the 2000s the Muslim Association of Canterbury did produce two Islamic booklets: *Basic Principles of Islam* by Auckland-based Mohammad Thompson and *Study Course for New Muslims* by Al Dhaheri and Strauch).²⁹³

In 1988 Jaafar Hall was elected president of the Muslim Association of Canterbury.²⁹⁴ On 10 July Television New Zealand transmitted a 30 minute documentary entitled *The Way We Are*, featuring Hall and his family. Hall was a tall, quietly spoken Englishman of considerable dignity and great personal insight. This was an excellent instrument for Dawah and videos of the documentary were used by universities and schools for the purpose of teaching students about Islam for a decade or so. Jaafar Hall passed away in hospital following a stroke on Friday 19 March 2004. Later that, in September 1988, the Canterbury mosque was visited for two days by two Saudis: Abdullah Naseef, then secretary-general of the Muslim World League, and Hamed Al Raddadi, the League's Director of Mosques. 'The mosque had given Christchurch's Muslim community of about 300 a greater sense of

²⁹³ Thompson, Mohammad F., *Basic Principles of Islam* (Auckland: Islamic Information Service, 2004); *Study Course for New Muslims*, Sameh Strauch, ed. Ali Ateeq Sultan Al Dhaheri (Christchurch: Muslim Association of Canterbury, 2004).

²⁹⁴ Jaafar Hall, 'Message from: Muslim Association of Canterbury', *Al-Muslim*, Number 1, 1988, p. 17.

identity and self-sufficiency, said Dr Abdullah.’²⁹⁵ Underlining this Saudi Arabian connection Sheikh Fouad Al Khateeb, the Saudi Ambassador to Malaysia, visited New Zealand in August 1989 and made a special effort to take his family to visit the *Masjid Al-Noor*.²⁹⁶ Christchurch Muslims also hosted a conference on Palestine on behalf of the FIANZ in 1988. Delegates from all over the world and around New Zealand attended and later visited the mosque as part of their programme.²⁹⁷ This was followed in April 1989 with a visit to the mosque by a Jewish human right activist Marth Rosenbluth. ‘There was a dinner followed by informal discussion. Approximately 60 prominent non-Muslims attended.’²⁹⁸ In 1989 local man Abdul Hadi Bollard, another convert to Islam, was elected president of the Association.

On Sunday 16 April 1989 a public forum on Islam was held at Akaroa. The official FIANZ newsletter reported rather prosaically:

In a packed community hall, residents from all over the Banks Peninsula came to listen to the message of Islam. The Sec-General of FIANZ [G.I. Abdur Razzaq Khan] and Dr William Sheppard [sic] (Senior lecturer in Religious Studies at Canterbury University) spoke at the gathering. This was the first time the message of Islam had reached this corner of NZ.²⁹⁹

Presumably Khan was unfamiliar with Sheikh Mahomet Din who had lived in that very port in the 1900s and had a high profile at the time.

Furthermore when Eid Al Fitr fell on Sunday 7 May that year, the Association approached Television New Zealand with the outcome that the president and two female converts to Islam were interviewed at the mosque regarding the religious festivities. The Malaysian halal slaughter men and local Muslim ladies from Malaysia organised a special Malay cuisine feast. One convert, Norhayati Abdullah, explained how Eid was akin to the Christian celebration of Christmas.³⁰⁰

In 1989 the Islamic Finance Fund was started by Abdul Hadi Bollard and Muhammad Ali.

²⁹⁵ ‘Gulf Cease-fire good for N.Z.’, *PR*, 9 September 1988, p. 5.

²⁹⁶ ‘Stop Press’, *Al Muslim*, Number 4, 1989, p. 22.

²⁹⁷ Mahmud Hashamuddin, ‘Community News’, *Al-Muslim*, Number 3, 1989, p. 9.

²⁹⁸ Salih Al Samahy, ‘President’s Message’, *Al-Muslim*, Number 3, 1989, p. 2; and Hashamuddin, ‘Community News’, *Al-Muslim*, p. 9.

²⁹⁹ ‘FIANZ News’, *Al-Muslim*, Number 4, 1989, p. 10.

³⁰⁰ The Mainland Touch, ‘Ramadan’, 9 May 1989, reported by Allannah Jones, New Zealand Television Archives, 1:17 mins.

Contributors were to share 75% of the profit while 25% was to be donated to the Islamic Federation annually.³⁰¹ Unfortunately the project did not perform well and was quietly dropped. Also during that year two long standing members of the Canterbury Muslim community left the country, seriously depriving the Association of their experience and leadership: Osman Gaafar and the part time acting lay-imam Muhammad Swaiti. Gaafar completed his PhD at Lincoln College in 1988 and took up a position in the Department of Animal Sciences at the College of Agriculture in Oman the following year.³⁰²

The Muslim Association of Canterbury would not acquire a proper full-time Mullah until the late 1990s when Sheikh Abdur Rahman Mohamed Mohamud from Somalia became the semi-permanent Imam at the mosque. Born in Mogadishu in 1969 his English remained rudimentary and he undertook his Khutbah (sermons) entirely in Arabic. As Imam he did try to participate in Dawah to the best of his abilities. Following the 11 September al Qaeda attacks in the USA he undertook an interview with the local newspaper in an effort to explain the religion of Islam and emphasize how the Muslims of Christchurch believed that the city was their home.³⁰³ In February 2003 he was qualified to perform marriages according to New Zealand law. Critics accused him, unfairly, of siding with whoever was on the Association Executive Committee and declining to throw his support behind any one given faction or policy. The Mullah left permanently for Perth, Australia, in late 2004 (entirely without warning and possibly exasperated by poor communal leadership and incessant arguments).

One of the best exempla of the ambiguity of the Muslim experience in 'the West' is the conundrum surrounding education in secular schools and the socialisation of Muslim youth. In fact Shepard, commenting on the New Zealand Muslim experience in general, observed: 'the concern to pass on the faith to the next generation that was growing up in a non-Muslim environment appears to have been one of the major motives for the founding of the [Islamic] associations.'³⁰⁴ Organising regular Arabic and Quran lessons for children should not be rated as a benchmark point of communal self-identification. However, Muslim parents usually try to instil Islamic values to their progeny as early as possible. In the absence of any such instruction in mainstream schools, Arabic and Quran classes are one of the first things organised in Islamic centres and mosques and these become more important than they would normally be inside a Muslim society. Enrolling and nurturing children and youth serves two

³⁰¹ Hashamuddin, 'Community News', p. 9.

³⁰² Hashamuddin, 'Community News', p. 9.

³⁰³ Tara Ross, 'Shared Beliefs', *PR*, 22 September 2001, pp. 2-3.

³⁰⁴ William Shepard, 'Muslims in New Zealand', *Muslim Minorities in the West: Visible and Invisible*, eds., Yvonne Y. Haddad and Jane I. Smith, (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2002), p.240.

purposes. Firstly, it is an obvious and easy way to keep both the family and the wider Muslim community together in the faith. It is one of the few issues where all parents agree on its level of significance and priority; it would be a strange mosque in New Zealand, indeed, that did not proffer regular Quran lessons for children. Secondly, in the long run, it helps to boost congregational numbers and reinforce group solidarity. Muslim youngsters are kept busy, engaged and active at the mosque, and away from the various perceived snares and suspicious distractions of the pervasive and persuasive non-Muslim secular social milieu and potentially unwholesome peer association. Muslim parents are usually conscientious persons who earnestly commit time and energy to family life in accordance with Islamic principles. The young are always welcome and encouraged to attend mosques services and to participate in (and learn) prayers. Some migrant groups maintain a distinctly introvert conceptualisation of Islam, making it difficult to attract (or maintain) converts – this makes the continued Islamic faith of the children all the more crucial both to their parents and wider community. There are however differences in parenting, for example, with regard to the enforcement of discipline and the degree of socialisation with non-Muslim youth. Much depends on the parents themselves and their own personalities, education and comprehension of Islam.

Evolving Community Tensions

All comprehension and understandings of history – past events and persons – affect and influence the present. A huge cultural misunderstanding unfolded after the 1980s as newly arriving Muslim migrants and refugees, unfamiliar with New Zealand laws or social norms (and often only a rudimentary, cultural or tribal grasp of Islamic etiquette) literally fought it out for the title of ‘President’ inside the Canterbury mosque. The carefully fostered group solidarity of the 1960s and 1970s, the *‘asabiyyah*, came to be totally lost or disregarded by the late 1990s. For example there were three serious Alterations to the Rules submitted to the Companies Office within six years: in November 1997 by interim president Dr Alayan, and again twice in April and June of 2002. There had already been some quiet and minor discussions in the 1980s about the exact role of the Quranic *muhkamat* (Arabic: verses of plain meaning) from the *mutashabihat* and *amthal* (similitudes and figures of speech) and their application within New Zealand and in a New Zealand religious organisation, but these issues were unhelpfully repeated and amplified in tone and manner throughout the 1990s.³⁰⁵

One startling fact emerged clearly. The rapid growth in numbers due to immigration from

³⁰⁵ For this section, see: Ian Clarke, ‘Essentialising Islam: Multiculturalism and Islamic Politics in New Zealand’, *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies*, Volume 8, Number 2 (December 2006), pp.69-96; Matt Philp, ‘Mosque Woes’, *PR*, 6 May 2006, pp. D1-2; Erich Kolig, *New Zealand’s Muslims and Multiculturalism (Muslim Minorities)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp.225-234.

the Third World countries (particularly Africa and Asia) from the late 1980s onwards, and the range of concomitant dramatic changes across the Muslim community (in a variety of aspects), did not lead to a corresponding improvement in the quality of leadership. In some respects it proved the reverse: upsetting the precarious equilibrium by the 1990s and replacing the optimistic illusion of certitude with unexpected challenges and intra-community rancour. Another issue worth noting here was the increasingly pronounced Saudi connection. As discussed previously, the Saudi charity *Rabitah Al Alam Al Islami* (Muslim World League) had injected a substantial and generous amount of money into the mosque project for South Island Muslims. Subsequently there were many more Saudi visitors than perhaps might have ordinarily made the effort to visit such a geographically isolated and distant congregation (certainly one that had not drawn any such Saudi interest before this period). Clearly the 1977 leaders of the Muslim Association of Canterbury were animated by a deep critical reflection when they perceived the entwining of communal and spiritual identities as the only viable option to create a general Muslim organisation. In his influential book *Islam in Focus* (available at most New Zealand mosques) the Egyptian scholar Hammudah Abdalati squarely grounds the ‘organic entity’ of the idealised Islamic community in chapter three of the Quran, verses 104 and 110. Abdalati states authoritatively on the requirements on both the individual and society:

The community in Islam is not founded on race, nationality, locality, occupation, kinship, or special interests. It does not take its name after the name of a leader or a founder or an event. It transcends national borders and political boundaries.... The historic role of the Islamic Community is to be the true embodiment of the virtuous, the wholesome, and the noble.³⁰⁶

The experience of migration to New Zealand certainly foreshadowed an inclination to emphasize the Islamic component of personal and group identity but it never entirely replaced it. However the experience did serve to reduce (if irregularly) some national, linguistic and ethnic tensions. Above all else there was an overwhelming concern for the spiritual welfare of the younger folk – the transient foreign students who had constituted a large section of the minority for twenty years but also the growing number of progeny of the immigrants who were looking towards long term settlement.

Whilst myth is common to all human experience and comprehension of the past, it is particularly prevalent, although not always easy to gauge as such, in the field of religion. In identifying phantasmagoria inside the readers own spiritual culture, the individual is

³⁰⁶ Hammudah Abdalati, *Islam in Focus* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1975), p. 38.

essentially undermining his or her own self confidence. Few social groups will pursue that path. Why would they? It must be understood that although the Quran may have provided a broad code of human conduct (albeit one that asserts sacred sanction), the challenge of integrating new Muslim migrants into the evolving ethical considerations of the existing Canterbury Muslim community into one idealised *ummatun wasat* (balanced community) proved difficult. The job of mosque president was assumed, especially by the newer and less educated migrants who arrived during and after the 1990s, to involve either some degree of *hukm ilahi* (divine governance) that necessitated righteous office bearers with suitable beards and appropriate turbans. The post was sometimes assumed to carry some weighty significance and clout, and constitute a real path to serious influence and power inside New Zealand. This was contrary to the reality of hours of dedicated, unpaid, unrewarded voluntary communal service.

The key word here is *umma* (or *ummah*). This verb and noun is usually translated as ‘community’ but in fact has the stronger trans-national sentiment of a commonwealth of (Muslim) believers. The *Oxford Dictionary of Islam* defines the term *ummah* as ‘a fundamental concept in Islam, expressing the essential unity and theoretical equality of Muslims from diverse cultural and geographical settings.’³⁰⁷ The United Nations, for example is, in Arabic, the *Al-Umam Al-Muttahidah*, (*umam* is plural of *ummah*). The idea is rooted in the Quran:

Thus We have appointed you a middle nation [*ummatun-wasat*], that ye may be witnesses against mankind, and that the Messenger may be a witness over you. (2:143)³⁰⁸

Theoretically this *ummah* is supposed to supersede even tribal or racial allegiances.

O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Lo! The noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. (49:13)³⁰⁹

Within New Zealand, and indeed in most Muslim communities living inside Western societies where the Muslims invariably hail from differing lands, the word has been employed to refer to the entire Islamic community regardless of race, ethnicity or language.

³⁰⁷ John L. Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p.327.

³⁰⁸ Mohd. Marmauduke Pickthall, *The Holy Qur'an Transliteration in Roman Script* (New Delhi: Kutub Khana Ishayat-ul-Islam, 2002), p.23.

³⁰⁹ Mohd. Marmauduke Pickthall, *The Holy Qur'an Transliteration in Roman Script*, p.509.

Izetbegovic spells this point out: ‘Islam recognises nations and itself becomes a new dimension above them – ummah – that is, supernationality of all Muslims.’³¹⁰ Naturally this approach is most practical where there are a multiplicity of nationalities praying side by side inside one mosque, sharing a common space, and keeps the issue of subsumption (where minorities are absorbed into a majority social group or deliberately marginalised) at bay. The advantage is that it allows immigrants and refugees to maintain a degree of religio-cultural autonomy from other migrants (linguistic and so forth); the disadvantage is that there then exists no compelling cultural model to integrate or assimilate into, and that individuals may hold onto unhelpful cultural baggage from their particular homeland. Izetbegovic further described the *ummah* as a ‘spiritual-political community’ suggesting socio-political aims and objectives.³¹¹ However these can differ widely from one sub-section of the community to another (class and gender for instance). As we have seen there were many challenges to bringing Muslims together and maintaining a measure of communal unity.

Gradually forming an implicit challenge to the hegemony of the older generation of migrants, very few of these new migrants were fully informed of the 1956 Incorporated Societies Act (under which the Muslim Association was governed according to New Zealand law). This meant regular and fair elections were held for the various posts on the governing Executive Committee, with candidates nominated from among the membership. The Association president simply presided over meetings, the Association Treasurer was charged with keeping the mosque accounts in order, and so forth. When the Muslim community was small and resources limited, few individuals were overly interested in volunteering their time and energy. Consequently it was common enough for the same folk to be elected year in, year out. Once the mosque was built and functioning however, more Muslim migrants and refugees were attracted to settle in the city (over, say, the choice of living in Auckland or elsewhere in New Zealand) and attend the *Masjid al-Noor*. The mood changed and interest in exercising authority through the Executive Committee grew proportionately. It was sometimes assumed that the mosque must be governed according to various different (and often competing) interpretations of the Shariah of the home country of the Muslim migrants themselves and some individuals were genuinely surprised to learn that a mosque could function in an ostensibly Christian and occidental society at all. The British Historian R. G. Collingwood once wrote that ‘Thinking means asking questions’.³¹² Clearly less educated Muslim refugees were either not asking, or asking the wrong ones, or drawing wildly incorrect conclusions. The question of how exactly a mosque came to be in New Zealand

³¹⁰ Alija Ali Izetbegovic, *Islam between East and West* (Planfield, Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1999), p. 197.

³¹¹ Izetbegovic, *Islam between East and West*, p.249.

³¹² R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 281.

causa sui remained an ongoing mystery for some Muslim migrants during this period. Pronounced and unspoken assumptions of intellectual, educational or cultural superiority (or at least difference) between the various ethnic, tribal, linguistic and social groups also undermined the communal unity and goodwill built up so carefully through the 1970s. The veracity of their personal and communal conclusions within New Zealand were very much determined and judged according to their own experiences outside New Zealand.³¹³

On top of this, an inner circle of FIANZ leaders and cadres effectively made Hindi the informal *lingua franca* of internal communications of the Federation Office in Wellington much to the frustration and suspicion of other immigrant groups (particularly the resident Arabs).³¹⁴ Labouring under this massive misapprehension and utter cognitive dissonance, the mosque (and more accurately the Muslim Association of Canterbury) rapidly became, by the late 1990s, a socio-political battleground between rival groups and febrile individuals, rather than an organisation committed to the spiritual welfare of the faithful. In 1999 the FIANZ Annual Report stated optimistically that ‘through the efforts of FIANZ Executive and other concerned Muslims, the differences between the two groups of Muslims in Christchurch have been resolved amicably. We hope that such incidents do not occur in the future.’³¹⁵ However two years later another annual report observed cryptically: ‘Br Mustaq Sharif went to Christchurch as an observer for FIANZ, to attend the Annual General Meeting of MAC last year.’³¹⁶ A year later it was reported: ‘Unfortunately problems at MAC are continuing... Recently the Ulema Board representatives also went to Christchurch but to no avail.’³¹⁷ It seems newer migrants and refugees were holding solidly to ingrained core beliefs with little critique. Indeed, a total rejection of new evidence held sway and ultimately some resorted to subterfuge, ignoring and denying anything that did not fit in with core beliefs or values. The situation was exasperated by the desire of, and unwise advice emanating from, some members of the Executive Committee of the Islamic Federation who ostensibly sought to conciliate the disputants but were really focused on keeping information about financial and halal matters top secret for ‘commercial’ reasons.

This dubious altruism compounded the confusion that spiralled out of control due to ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) and ‘Chinese Whispers’. Under these twin curses facing the burgeoning community, otherwise mundane ideas or expressions became entirely

³¹³ See: Louise Humpage, below.

³¹⁴ Certainly as I observed whilst working at the office of the Islamic Federation in Wellington from 1999 to 2002.

³¹⁵ ‘4.1 Muslim Association of Canterbury (MAC)’, FIANZ Annual Report, 12 June 1999, p.10.

³¹⁶ ‘4.2 Muslim Association of Canterbury (MAC)’, FIANZ: Proceedings of the 23rd Annual General Meeting, 26-27 May 2001, unpaginated.

³¹⁷ ‘4.4 Muslim Association of Canterbury’, 2002 FIANZ Annual Report, May 2002, p. 16.

distorted. Tortuous rumours took on a life of their own creating a huge misapprehension around everything from FIANZ specifically to Islam in New Zealand generally. Language achieves two main points: it conveys content and negotiates relationships. This is undertaken through a comprehension of the literal explicit form that signifies the most obvious details of the sentence. However, popular vernacular idiom and deliberately veiled language requires listeners to read between the lines and is much harder to determine. In the absence of a fluent command of the English language and its careful nuances and ambiguities, migrants and refugees invariably find themselves at a horrible position in social communications and interactions. Much of this disorganised complexity was evident inside the Canterbury mosque over the 1990s and 2000s.

Louise Humpage, a scholar at Canterbury University, pinpointed several key areas in her 2000 research on the failure of Somali resettlement in Canterbury in the 1990s: poor educational levels, low literacy (in both their native language and that of the host country), profoundly unrealistic academic aims, and poor and confrontational levels of interaction between Somalis and other New Zealanders.³¹⁸ Needless to say, the word ‘Somali’ could easily be replaced with the expression ‘immigrant Muslim’ and sum up the 1990s and 2000s at the Canterbury mosque. On top of these debilitating proclivities there were wildly differing assessments among the Muslim Association of Canterbury ‘leadership’ regarding the exact role of FIANZ, and the resolution, decisiveness and leadership of FIANZ in turn. In part, no doubt, these contumacious developments reflect the popular Muslim philosophy that Allah is working out His inscrutable will and purpose through history and it is the inalienable right or obligation of every devout Muslim to learn, articulate and enforce what is morally correct (theologically halal) and stop what is impermissible (haram). So long as the line of perception was poorly informed and history was confused with faith (or indeed fantasy), such folk would invariably draw distorted conclusions about what exactly constituted halal and haram.³¹⁹

Some Arab migrants (not all it must be noted) maintained a distinctly *Primus inter pares* mentality towards other Muslim migrants and refugees. According to this view the *sunnat Allah* (customs set by God) was the *sunnat al ‘Arab* (customs of the Arabs). This is the issue of subsumption again, the process where one social unit absorbs another. The 1957 observations of Reuben Levy about Islamic history are still valid here today:

³¹⁸ Vladimir Madjar and Louise Humpage, *Refugees in New Zealand: The Experience of Bosnian and Somali Refugees*, Working Paper Series, Number 1 (Massey University, 2000).

³¹⁹ Private correspondence, author’s possession.

Once Islam was adopted by peoples beyond the confines of Arabia, the ordinary full-blooded free Bedouin tribesman, the *sarih*, inevitably regarded himself as the superior of the new foreign converts. In the same way that the old nobility resisted the assumption of equality by the other Arabs, so the inhabitants of Arabia as a whole refused to consider foreigners as being their peers, in spite of the demand of their common faith that social and genealogical inequalities were to cease.³²⁰

On the other hand ethnic Indians were (and are) a thrifty hard-working segment of the Muslim population who had always laboured to keep the mosque property clean and tidy. In later (more recent) years, it has been observed that, without their ongoing contribution, the toilets, the carpets, the lawn, the kitchen (notoriously), and plants were simply neglected until it slowly dawned on the newer migrant groups that these maintenance tasks were not performed by ‘magical midnight pixies’. In the long run, after the 1990s, many local Muslims chose to perform *Wudu* (ablutions) at home, and few volunteered to clean up at the mosque on any regular basis.³²¹

Centrifugal elements did not tear the community asunder after the 1990s, as is sometimes intimated by various observers; rather, poor leadership did.³²² The contrast between South Island Muslim community leadership in the 1970s and 1980s as compared to the late 1990s is most striking. In turn, this factor (regardless of sincerity or geniality) fuelled further resentment and antagonism. A few Asian Muslims dismissed the Arab migrants privately as *Arabestani*: a Turkic expression reminding everyone of the historic period when the Ottomans ruled much of Arabia as a provincial outpost. In return, Arabs and Arabic speaking Somalis sometimes spoke of Indians and South Asians in general as *Hindustani*, with a deliberate emphasis on the first two syllables (*Hin-du*), as opposed to the more accurate *Hindi*. Cultural issues that were ignored or suppressed in the early period came to the fore as the number of each migrant group grew. For example, Arabs and Somalis universally objected to the widespread and consistent Indian affection for the rather harmless chronogram ‘786’ as base superstitious numerology.³²³ This was used ubiquitously as shorthand for *Bismillah ir-rahman ir-rahim* (in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful). There were also verbal discussions on both sides about the cultural permeation and infiltration of un-Islamic *Seerat al-Ajam* (history or customs of foreigners).

³²⁰ Reuben Levy, *The Social Structure of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, Second Edition), p. 57.

³²¹ Private correspondence, author’s possession.

³²² Matt Philp, ‘Mosque Woes’, *PR*, 6 May 2006, pp. D1-2.

³²³ It continues to be employed throughout the New Zealand Muslim population – particularly by South Asian Muslims – on correspondence, telephone numbers, gravestones and so forth.

There is an important diachronic dimension to the discourse of this period. It has been estimated that somewhere between two-thirds and three-quarters of all New Zealand Muslims could be described broadly as ‘Indian’ in the sense that they or their ancestors hailed from India or South Asia.³²⁴ However, with the passing of time and further analysis, intermarriage and degrees of assimilation, changing patterns of immigration and emigration, such cursory evaluations appear increasingly subjective and raise critical (and possibly un-answerable) questions about ethnicity, the irregularity of its indicators or measurements, and woolly notions of ‘race’ according to either contemporary or past sources. To locate and identify ethnic Indian migrants from Fiji (whose forebears invariably came from diverse and unrelated regions on the Asian sub-continent and were obliged to intermarry and forge an essentially new cultural paradigm with its own unique dialect) inside New Zealand for example, can only be undertaken with serious qualifications.³²⁵ I suspect the appellation ‘Indian’ might be less accurate or appropriate than ‘Punjabi’, ‘Gujarati’ or ‘Fijian’ in many cases.³²⁶ Even distinctions between Northern Indians and Pakistanis for example, contrast with those from the Dravidian south of the subcontinent, or the Bengalis and Bangladeshi folk of eastern India. Do we include Afghans within the South Asian cultural rubric? On the other hand, in the non-Muslim media sources such as newspapers there is seldom any such distinction (or indeed any real sense of who these folk actually are or in turn, the impact consistently conflated media reporting might exert upon the wider Islamic community itself). The reality is that Muslim communities across New Zealand have always possessed differing and competing histories, socio-economic capital, and various competing cultural prejudices and priorities.

Dawah and Theology

Pinning down theological precedent here is as tricky as nailing jelly to a wall. The early Muslim Association patricians – the Kara brothers, Khawaja, Quazi, Al Samahy and Gafuur – were all pious Sunni Muslims reasonably un-distracted by sectarian notions. The Muslim Association remains avowedly Sunni in character, but further details or platitudinous

³²⁴ William Shepard, ‘The Muslim Community in New Zealand’, Chapter 5, *Indians in New Zealand*, ed. by K.N. Tiwari (Wellington: Price-Milburn, 1980), p.181; Christopher van der Krogt, ‘Islam’, *Religions of New Zealanders*, ed. Peter Donovan (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1990), p.191; Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism (Muslim Minorities)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp.24-25.

³²⁵ This is even more so for the Muslim religious minority within this ethnic minority. In *Rama's Banishment; A Centenary Tribute to the Fiji Indians 1879-1979* (ed. Vijay Mishra, 1979) Brij V. Lal observed ‘Fiji's *Kalkatias* (those who embarked at Calcutta) came from a surprisingly large number of districts and regions of India – over 230 in fact Orissa, Tibet, Kabul, Mysore...’ (p.19). He then provides the statistics for ‘Muslims (all castes)’ who immigrated to Fiji between 1879 and 1916 - including Pathan and ‘sheik’ - as 14.5%.

³²⁶ Was Wuzerah the first Indian Muslim settler or an ethnic Pathan or Afghani? It might well make a pertinent difference.

classifications were kept deliberately vague in a sentimental effort to make everyone feel welcome. The theological ideas permeating and percolating through a small and fluctuating congregation thousands of miles away from the mainstream centres of adherence to that particular faith are often (or always) much more variegated and confused than it might appear at first. Some folk would use 'complex' rather than 'confused' but I suspect the latter adjective captures the sentiment much more accurately. For this salient reason it is exceptionally problematic for observers or participants to pinpoint (beyond the basic Five Pillars of Islam) any one great philosophical issue or theme of the period or place, with which most members of the congregation are uniformly united or profess.

Few subjects are more emotive or shrouded in myth than the issue of conversion to Islam. Converts to Islam are Muslims but they are – in New Zealand – also usually either Pakeha, European, Maori or Polynesian and are seldom migrants or refugees themselves, by definition.³²⁷ Therefore they invariably belong to a specific community within the wider Muslim population – a distinctive subculture whose presence can highlight the profound internal cultural differences. An important goal of Canterbury Muslim community leaders in the 1970s and 1980s was *Dawah*: explaining the message (*risala*) and spreading of the faith (*din*) of Islam. The creation of the Muslim Association in 1977 and the Islamic Federation in 1979, and the construction of the *Masjid Annur*, naturally helped to facilitate this task: regionally and nationally ideas and strategies were discussed (verbally and in writing), mosque open days and topical conferences staged, overseas guest speakers invited and so forth. Educated voices gave some cerebral articulation to what had long been a largely private religious affair of a minority of foreign students and immigrants. Folk such as Dr Quazi and Abdul Razaq Khan communicated Islam intelligently with the media and journalists were encouraged to liaise with elected Muslim leaders and spokespersons.

The ideal of spreading Islam organically, through the miscible conversion of local populace, remained alive for almost a decade and there was a concerted effort to secure recruits to the faith – and to appoint some such postulants on to the governing Executive Committee of the Association. However the cornerstone of immigrant identity is primarily ethnic or racial, despite the best efforts to disguise this by mosque leaders. Some have taken their spiritual identity seriously and have committed to articulating their conceptualisations. As previously mentioned, the Bangladeshi immigrant A. Rahman Khan wrote very piquantly in a 1981

³²⁷ It appears New Zealanders have been converting to Islam at least since Neil Dougan of Auckland visited Afghanistan in 1969 and became a prominent Sufi teacher – his students called him 'Sheikh' Abdullah Isa. Several of his pupils converted to Islam in the 1970s and one Robert 'Abdul Salim' Drake was the architect for the oldest purpose-built mosque in New Zealand, that of Ponsonby in central Auckland. See: Drury, *Islam in New Zealand*, pp.25-28.

FIANZ newsletter *Al Muslim*: ‘The formation of the federation in 1979 is clearly an indication that the Muslim community has long past the phase of being in New Zealand and is now manifestly of New Zealand.’³²⁸ However, since New Zealand Muslim communal identification is a new phenomenon with no substantial historical roots, there remains a degree of ongoing internal ambiguity. What does it mean to be a New Zealand Muslim? Who are the real New Zealand Muslims and who are the transients? Individual immigrants might like to pretend a measure of ‘kiwi-ness’ but they aren’t fooling anyone, least of all other migrants. The wise reader thinks of James Belich’s sage observations about the successful spread of Western, institutional and syncretic forms of Christianity in New Zealand during the 19th century by both European Missionaries and Christian settlers plus an important wave of Maori converts themselves spreading the faith: the “conversion of conversion.”³²⁹

Formal conversion to Islam is a fairly straight forward affair and involves merely pronouncing the *shahada* or creed of *La ‘ilaha ‘ill-Allah, Mu‘ammadu-rasool-ullah* (there is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God) before four adult witnesses. These rites of initiation and installation inculcate the lesson that the individual is basically at one with both God and the community. Fundamental to this simplicity is the theological notion of ‘*fitrah*’ meaning disposition or nature – it is assumed in Islam that the faith is the natural practice of humanity, that all babies are in a sense born Muslim and that converts to Islam are in fact merely returning to the natural state of existence. Many even repudiate the word ‘convert’ as inaccurate and insist upon the more theoretically correct word ‘revert’. However this pedantry generally throws up linguistic confusion and is seldom employed. Historically it was traditional for a convert to become, essentially, a client or *mawali* of his or her mentor or patron at the mosque (usually the husband and his family if the convert was a female). The prayers and meditations of the postulant must always be monitored by a ‘competent’ supervisor. In reality however, a plethora of variegated social and personal factors have always influenced the phenomena since the advent of Islam itself to the present day. The putative re-configuration or recalibration of personal and social relationships, identifications and even – broadly – allegiances, are often more much complex than either party normally understands. Different degrees of comprehension of Arabic, the Quran and the runes of Islamic wisdom, are the most obvious points of demarcation. In effect this buddy or chaperone system persists to this day, at least in theory, although in a looser form, to ensure some measure of practical support to the ‘new Muslim’. This monomythical point is

³²⁸ A. Rahman Khan, ‘Muslims in New Zealand: A Review’, *The Muslim*, Volume 1, Number 2, February 1981, pp 12-13.

³²⁹ James Belich, *Making Peoples*, 1996, page 223.

axiomatic to understanding migrant conceptions surrounding conversion to Islam – the convert is often associated directly with the one who ‘converted’ him or her to Islam. (It is a frequent question directed at converts: who converted you to Islam? The safest response is to name the Mullah who was present at the time). Perhaps the key word here is ‘myth’. The Islamic convert is always expected to be in or part of some kind of client relationship with some migrant at the mosque. Independence from this conceptual framework (or expressions thereof) arouses suspicion and concern. Of course outside traditional Muslim lands with enforceable Shariah courts, Islamic customary ‘law’ lacks any coercive powers apart from peer pressure.

Muslims have very different perceptions of the details of their faith. Throughout the period of examination (and indeed to the present) South Island Muslim leadership and most members of the Muslim Association of Canterbury would undoubtedly refute the appellation ‘Wahhabi’ or ‘Salafi’. However the juxtaposition across New Zealand mosque libraries of literature by identified Hanbali, Wahhabi or Salafi authors where the *Milad-an-Nabi* is celebrated for instance, at once calls to mind the complex differences and overlaps in theological style and sentiment of these perceptions of the Islamic faith itself. The book *In the Shade of the Quran* by Sayyid Qutb for example, may be thought by some as a radical copernican revolution in Islamic theology but it may also evince a genuinely pious (if naïve) appreciation for some of the authors unique insights into the holy book, the *Kitab Al-Karim*, rather than any wider political or pejorative ideological ramifications.³³⁰

The late twentieth century in particular has seen a flourishing of publications about Islam and by Muslims, many of which made their way to the Canterbury Muslim Association and into the mosque library. Since 1980 Saudi Arabia has been at the forefront of printing and diffusing Islamic literature, much of it by authors according with the official religious and ideological perspectives of the kingdom. Leaders invariably use books to define their own image and assert their intellectual authority, and certainly there is little debate that most literature emanating from Saudi Arabia (and essentially then, from the Saudi royal family and their support network rooted in Wahhabi ideas) espouses a very conservative interpretation of Islam that calls for some suspension of the individual’s personal faculties of reasoning and discernment on certain issues. This has had a decidedly mixed reception within New Zealand mosques precisely because it has been so confused and frequently bears the hallmarks of literature published in some sort of hurry: spelling mistakes, grammatical

³³⁰ I recall the FIANZ office in Wellington had a complete set of *The Green Book* by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi on the library shelves. They were practically untouched, a gift from the Libyan embassy, and excited real anger in several Arab visitors.

errors, occasional paragraphs lifted from other sources without reference notations, or footnotes that are longer than the text on the page. All theological material emanating from this source appears to be authored by men alone.

However the migrant experience throws up challenges and new questions, and religio-communal conclusions that had proved perspicuous for over 1400 years become meaningless and obscure in a new social structure. Newer ideas and books that have come out of traditional Muslim heartlands appear to have only partially addressed these issues of faith in relation to social realities of Muslims living inside Western societies. Literature demanding *Muslimah* stay at home and only leave with a male escort from the household demonstrates both a profoundly poor understanding of Islam and a terribly unrealistic grasp of the realities of life inside a nuclear family (or indeed a migrant one). To any non-Muslim who casually flicks through the pages of some of the ‘new’ Islamic literature for the first time, the literary or intellectual appeal, or indeed any other reason for their impact, may not be apparent. The corpus invariably bristles with obscure critiques, abstruse paradoxes and theoretical considerations that initially seem hopelessly removed from the realities and imperative perplexities of everyday life. Even books in reasonably coherent English have often been composed in a heavily ESOL style that, whilst technically and linguistically correct and intelligible, can make for ponderous reading. The strength and ongoing appeal of such material is of course the overwhelming simplicity (and sincerity) of the language, and admittedly amidst the contentious dross and doldrums there are occasional flashes of brilliant insight that can create a positive impression of genuine profundity.

At another level allegedly Wahhabi or Salafi ‘literature’ is sometimes simply dismissed popularly as strangely doctrinaire irrational, the authors regarded as cerebral Luddites or fringe anti-modernists, like the *Tablighi Jamaat*. Arguably, both are rebels trying to return to an imaginary utopia of the past; they are in revolt against a perceived hypertrophy of traditional or customary Muslim thought, reason, philosophy and social practices rooted in (or manifest in) various regional folk customs. The *Tablighi Jamaat* activities are a useful paradigm for consideration here, a physical interpretation or manifestation perhaps of the gist of conservative Islamic literature. The Tablighi movement started in India and has always been strongest amongst Asian Muslims. Conservative (i.e., pro-Wahhabi) migrants and refugees from other societies may be sympathetic and empathetic, and both allow and participate in their group activities. However, Kolig observed that within New Zealand well-educated Arab Muslims remain somewhat dismissive of *Tablighi Jamaat* activities for two reasons: ‘They ascribe a specifically Indian-Islamic slant to it – which means to them it is lacking in Islamic purity – and because of the simplicity of the teaching, which is

sometimes not even in Arabic, the language of God, but in Gujarati or Urdu'.³³¹ Similarly, conservative Islamic literature has had a limited appeal across the wider South Island Muslim population.

I suspect that, over the past few decades, concerns beyond any religious minority's direct control (the fear of assimilation into the wider society) ebbed and flowed, intensified and waned, and focused on a point that it could control, namely the uniformity of internal religious practices within the mosque. The tangible if ironic net result of the plethora of mass produced popular Islamic literature (as opposed to academic or rational) and decades of Tablighi teachings, has been less focus on Quran studies and only further religious confusion. Far from bringing clarity to the faith and faithful, much of this literature has added degrees of further mystification that serves only to further confuse members of the Islamic community. These are the years when new migrants at the mosque (wearied by the sesquipedalian debates over constitutional quibbles of the Association AGM) declare boldly that the only constitution needed by the Muslims to regulate their lives is that of the Quran.³³² Yet the Quran alone was never adequate as a legal code and even the Prophet Muhammad saw fit to tweak laws, rules, customs, issues and miscellaneous matters from time to time for expediency. The Canterbury mosque was constructed according to New Zealand building legislation and run by an organisation registered as an Association according to the 1956 Incorporated Societies Act (a document infinitely more prosaic than the Holy Quran).

Theoretically Islamic worship and faith should ideally neither be formulaic lip service or a series of debates as incomprehensible as those between (Christian) Supralapsarians and the Infralapsarians. The reality has always been different. Historically (in the period following the death of the Prophet) subsequent Muslim rulers pressed localised traditions, customs and laws into the religious system whenever a new political issue necessitated an immediate resolution, and this ultimately developed into the Shariah as it is presented today (needless to say, further permeated with various written and unwritten native behavioural customs and traditions). Religions maintain their social status as significant societal movements and institutions by very carefully reformulating their beliefs and practices. Customs can only be changed or successfully affected from within a culture or society.

³³¹ Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism (Muslim Minorities)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 40.

³³² Private correspondence, author's possession.

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to elucidate, with respect to the South Island Muslim community, what happens when older understandings of a religion and spiritual or theological authority are challenged by newcomers. Historically Muslims (as individuals, families and within ethnic group identities) have always been obliged to reconsider, renegotiate and often conflate competing religious, linguistic and ethnic identities. Perhaps Kolig's words constitute the best point on which to close:

Uniting New Zealand's Muslims under one umbrella of common worship and maintaining a strong link with global Muslimhood is an impossible task, given the profound divisions. [...] Increasingly, as the Muslim population in the country grows, a trend appears of Islam threatening to drift further apart as it replicates the rifts in the global umma. Geographic distance from the traditional realm of the Islamic world no longer works as a uniting factor.³³³

My case study, I suggest, supports his thesis. Throughout the history of the confraternity of Muslims in New Zealand we observe continuity rather than closure. What indeed would be more normal and natural than an emphasis or preference amongst migrants and refugees for continuity rather than an abrupt change? Part of that continuity lies in the achievements of individual Muslim migrants who successfully transferred a cultural conceptualisation and practice of Islam to New Zealand and personalised it. In recent years this gambit or strategy has been tackled as inadequate or un-Islamic by more recent migrants who cannot fully comprehend the entire picture of historical events in this corner of the world. However it is also clear that an earlier generation of Muslims resident in the South Island managed reasonably well.

³³³ Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism*, p. 36.

CHAPTER SIX:

Consolidation:

Commerce and Expression of Community

Introduction

Following the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury, there was a push nationwide among Muslims from Auckland to Dunedin to establish a national organisation and to involve such a body in the burgeoning halal meat export trade. The 1980s saw a rise in Islamic literature that is worthy of attention here. Some was produced by, or had substantial input from, Canterbury Muslims. The aim of this chapter is to examine the role of Canterbury Muslims in the creation of the national Muslim body, the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ); the start of the halal meat trade and the development of halal certification; and to explore the role of Islamic publications by looking at the national Muslim newsletter and overseas books and booklets. Accordingly this chapter is divided into three parts which encompass the formation of FIANZ in 1979, the initiation of halal meat slaughter and certification in New Zealand, and finally the issue of Islamic literature during this period. The chapter will conclude that, whilst the act of co-opting and building up positive relationships between various Muslim families and international students and regional leadership had the effect of stabilising communal leadership to some degree, the evolution of the Muslim Association also partially demarcates and evinces the conscious adaptation to New Zealand law (particularly the social models and legal mechanisms) by newly arriving waves of immigrants and refugees from the Third World. Although the Association has no direct power over the lives of the faithful, I believe it possible to identify or infer within it a plethora of generalised themes, features and characteristics that help to define what was intended originally to become the religious and cultural centre of the Canterbury Muslim community. Long-term local Muslim residents obviously played more significant roles in the evolution of the organisation from an early point and provided great traction to community projects and objectives.

The discussion so far has suggested the purpose of the rather Promethean creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury and FIANZ was to provide formal institutional structures around which the growing domicile Muslim population could focus its communal and spiritual needs whilst interacting with the wider Occidental society. The 'historic mission' of Islam and the idealized Muslim community has taken on certain connotations in recent

decades (some quaintly nostalgic for seventh century Arabia and others hopelessly romantic and woolly) that are too complex to elaborate here. It is also worth noting, I believe, that Kara, Quazi and Khawaja all had experience either in or with Indian or student organisations. So whilst there was a quest to maintain religious practices based on traditional immigrant conceptualisations, there was simultaneously an interest in organising the Muslim population into some sort of structure with regular 'normative' (i.e. Mainstream or Western) features, hence the registered Association in Canterbury and the Federation of Islamic Associations at the national level.

The Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand: South Island Foundations

Throughout 1978 and 1979 Cantabrian Muslims 'played a significant role in the formation of the national Federation of the Islamic Associations in New Zealand.'³³⁴ Canterbury-based Dr Hanif Quazi, from Pakistan originally, was the first appointed Secretary and he stayed at this post for several years.³³⁵ The Muslim Association of Canterbury was an important foundation member of the first nationwide Muslim organisation, the result of conviction, faith and an enormous amount of goodwill. The act of co-opting and building up positive relationships within various Islamic institutions across New Zealand had the effect of stabilising leadership (incidentally undermining the potential appeal of radical ideas or tendencies here). There were several impulses towards the creation of a national Muslim organisation aside from the halal issue. Not least, to explore one example, was the calendrical issue of determining the exact temporal dates for the start and end of the fasting month of Ramadan and the two annual Eid celebrations. Local Muslim Associations might well determine the correct daily times for the five regular prayers inside their own urban environments, but by the 1970s a situation developed where the Eid festivals were sometimes celebrated on different days in differing cities. Auckland Muslims relied on very conservative interpretations of Quranic directives to physically sight the new moon, whilst Wellington and South Island Muslims were happy to accept international decisions, often relayed by Muslim staff at various embassies. One of the first objectives of the Federation was the formation of a national *Hilal* (moon) committee to liaise with reputable Islamic scholars on the subject abroad and local astronomical observatories in order to pinpoint the dates with more precision and foster greater consensus on the issue at the national level (to start Ramadan and celebrate the Eid festivals on the same day, for instance).

Following the creation of the Canterbury Association, members invited representatives of

³³⁴ 'The Muslim Association of Canterbury: Brief History and Main Activities', *The Muslim*, Volume 1, Number 3, June 1981, p. 25.

³³⁵ 'FIANZ in Retrospect', *The Muslim (N.Z.)*, Volume 3, Number 1, June 1985, p.7.

other Muslim Associations in Auckland and Wellington to visit Christchurch and discuss the growing need to create a national organisation. On Saturday, 18 November 1978, a preliminary meeting was held in Christchurch. Abbas Ahmed and Robert Abdul Salim Drake came from Auckland, representing the New Zealand Muslim Association. Hajji Salamat Khan, Dr Khalid Rashid Sandhu and Abdul Rahman Khan came from Wellington, representing the International Muslim Association of New Zealand (IMAN). Although there was no formal organisation, Ali Taal (a post graduate student from Gambia) came from Palmerston North. In Islam consensus, or *Ijma*, is an important guiding concept and from all accounts these meetings were very positive. The majority of people at this plenary session and ‘talking shop’ were Christchurch residents with excellent analytical processes: Mansoor A. Khawaja, Suliman Ismail Kara, Arifullah Khan, Abdul Razzaq Khan, Nur Nabi, Masud Nourafza, Hazrat Adam, Muhammed Ibrahim, Abdul Jalil Khan, Muhammed Hanif Quazi and many others. Quazi discussed the idea of forming a nationwide federation to regularly represent all of the Muslims of New Zealand to the government. After several introductory expositions a consensus was reached among the collocutors in principle on the general structure of the proposed body and it was agreed to meet again in Palmerton North the following year. On 6 February 1979 the second preparatory meeting was held at the Palmerston North residence of Ashraf Choudhary. Present were Hafiz Sidat and Syed Alvi from Auckland, Hajji Mohammed Hussain Sahib from Hamilton, Dr Khalid Sandhu and his wife Dr Razia Sandhu, Abdul Rahman Khan and Salamat Khan and his wife Yasmin and their daughter Miss Laila Khan from Wellington. Canterbury Muslims were represented by Hanif Quazi.³³⁶

On Sunday, 15 April, Mazhar Shukri Krasniqi of Auckland, was appointed the inaugural President of the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand. Certainly, Arab documents of the period refer to Krasniqi as the *Rayes* or Commander and this Illyrian exile was perhaps one of the most important figures in New Zealand Islamic history.³³⁷ Born in Prishtina, Kosova, on 17 October 1931, the resilient young Albanian fled the Communist dictatorship after World War Two.³³⁸ He arrived as a refugee on the MS Goya and worked on a farm in Gore, Southland, before moving to Auckland. He became deeply involved in the New Zealand Muslim Association in the 1960s and his simple, unaffected manner of speaking won many over. Krasniqi served as President of the New Zealand Muslim

³³⁶ ‘FIANZ in Retrospect’, *The Muslim (N.Z.)*, Volume 3, Number 1, June 1985, pp. 6-7.

³³⁷ Private letter to Mazhar Krasniqi from Muhammad Ali Al-Harakan, Secretary-General, *Rabitah Al-Alam Al-Islami* / Muslim World League, 23 January 1980; Reproduced in: Abdullah Drury, *Islam in New Zealand: The First Mosque* (Christchurch, 2006), p.150.

³³⁸ For more on Kosova history and Albanian emigration, see: Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1998), pp.285-286.

Association in Auckland twice – in 1977 and 1987. Two weeks after assuming the presidency of the Islamic Federation he oversaw the foundation stone laying ceremony in Ponsonby, central Auckland, for the country's first mosque and symbol of Islamic communal unity. He was also an early advocate of halal slaughter. Krasniqi had set up an export company in 1974 and successfully exported New Zealand 'honey, eggs and dairy produce' to the Middle East and was pivotal in pushing for halal slaughter at New Zealand freezing works throughout the decade.³³⁹ In January 2002 his inspirational leadership was rewarded with a Queens Service Medal recognising his decades of community service.³⁴⁰

In 1979 the newly created Federation consisted of the Muslim Association of Canterbury, the Wellington-based International Muslim Association of New Zealand (IMAN), and the Auckland-based New Zealand Muslim Association. Immediately following this Muslim Associations were established in Hamilton (Waikato) and Palmerston North (Manawatu) in 1980 and joined the Federation. The major objectives of the Islamic Federation were outlined in a November 1980 newsletter:

To promote the religious, social and economic welfare of the Muslims in New Zealand; To co-ordinate the propagation of Islam in New Zealand; To promote and maintain unity and brotherhood among the Muslims, within and outside New Zealand; To promote, organize and encourage religious, cultural and recreational Muslim youth activities; To establish and maintain liaison with kindred Islamic organizations overseas.³⁴¹

One notes the expressions 'Muslims in New Zealand' and 'unity and brotherhood' immediately. Clearly Muslims in New Zealand at this stage did not perceive themselves as indigenous or native, not 'of' New Zealand but 'in' it. Furthermore, the vigorous nod to 'unity' reminds us how significant this issue was at the time.³⁴²

The Islamic Federation was enlarged over the 1990s when it was joined by the Otago Muslim Association and the Islamic Women's Council of New Zealand. To some extent this could be interpreted as '*asabiyyah* or group solidarity on a national scale. The desire of

³³⁹ Warren Berryman and John Draper, 'Meat Exporters Resist Costly Islamic Crusade', *National Business Review (NBR)*, Volume 9, Number 16 (9 May, 1979), p. 1.

³⁴⁰ Thomson, Ainsley, 'Mazhar Krasniqi', *The New Zealand Herald (NZH)* (31 December 2002), p. A6; Khan, Zohoor Mohammad, 'Mazhar Shukri Krasniqi', *One Hundred Great Muslim Leaders of the 20th Century* (New Delhi: Institute of Objective Studies, 2006), pp.157-160; Abdyli, Sabit R., *Bijtë e shqipes në tokën e reve të bardha* (Auckland: Universal Print & Management, 2010), pp. 67-70.

³⁴¹ "A Brief Note on the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand", *The Muslim (New Zealand)*, Volume 1, Number 1 (November 1980), p.3.

³⁴² Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism*, pp.42-49.

Muslims across the country to come together in unison on issues of significance to the entire *ummah* resident in New Zealand. These disparate components of the Muslim population, as representatives of regional Islamic organisation, were supposed to coalesce into something resembling a coherent singular community. Since this period, the 1980s, other Muslim groups have formed (especially in Auckland) new Islamic organisations that do not seek membership of FIANZ and that have been arranged representing even more diverse components of the global Muslim population and with very different aims and objectives. An appreciation of the possibilities and the limits of solidarity also require a firm analytical grounding in local contexts; that is to say, that for such unity to function then community leaders had to be aware of the possibilities and realities at both a theoretical and a practical level. Perhaps the organic limits of *'asabiyyah* had been reached and breached.³⁴³

The arrival and introduction of Islam onto any new shore always concerns a measure of self-identity by those who are in the act of introducing it; those who continue to impress upon their communal characteristics particular local narratives with universal Islamic tropes and themes. New Zealand Muslim communal newsletters of the 1980s emphasized both the local historical narratives and the first century of Islam, but little in between. This perceived historical trajectory remains of fundamental concern to Muslim communal elites, even when it only appears obliquely, precisely because it serves to explain and justify the circumstances of their ongoing leadership. Given the incipient sensitivity of all contemporary history, efforts to explain or elaborate this point can rapidly evolve into accusations and self-justification. Accounts can serve to surround the protagonists with an aureole of virtue or vice, and questions about causes can easily turn into inquisitions; explanations slip into highly subjective evaluations, if not outright slander or libel. Johann Herder had a theory that nationality was defined by a common ethnic-cultural heritage expressed in a common language and in a very real sense every society (and every substratum of society) is constantly re-inventing itself, its values and its myths.³⁴⁴ The New Zealand Muslim community (the 'Nation of Islam' inside this land) is no exception and the newsletters and internal correspondence of the 1980s abound with repeated references (in clear English and citing Quranic Arabic sources) that the Muslim community in New Zealand constitutes one people, one *ummah*, rather than merely a selection of the general population.

However even within a small Muslim minority such as in New Zealand, the broad spectrum includes principled (if incipient) factionalism based on diverse theological and

³⁴³ Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism*, pp.30-39.

³⁴⁴ Johann Herder, *Treatise on the Origin of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp.65-164.

epistemological paradigms, and a sometimes bewildering variety of theoretical and ideological critiques. In examining the history of South Island Muslims, it is usually important to bear distinct questions in mind. Who formed the Islamic Federation and why? How? I like to think that final patterns of organisation were as important as the original ideas and ideals for the Association that to some extent claims to be the official representative face of Islam in the region. The very language, vocabulary and grammar that a folk group employ to define themselves, their heritage and their collective myths uncover a great deal about both their public principles and also their subconscious conjectures and basic suppositions. It is vitally important to identify with great precision exactly what were the defining features and characteristics of the Muslim Association of Canterbury at the inception of FIANZ.

Halal Food: Certification and Development of Trade

Another important, if understated, role of the Association was to determine and relay information regarding halal meat and food for consumption by local Muslims. The word halal simply means permissible. Yusuf Al Qaradawi has written: 'The first *asl*, or principle, established by Islam is that the things which Allah has created and the benefits derived from them are essentially for man's use, and hence are permissible.'³⁴⁵ The Quran forbids the consumption of pork and alcohol, and for meat to be properly considered halal then animal should be slaughtered by a Muslim who pronounces *Bismillah – Allahu Akbar* (In the name of God, God is great). Halal food then, is simply sustenance that falls within the Islamic dietary regulations.³⁴⁶ Until the 1970s halal meat in Christchurch was accessed entirely through private farms. Then Lester Sugden, of Burwood Poultry, came into the picture and provided a more legitimate avenue for the halal slaughter of poultry, sheep and beef. He became the main source of halal meat for many years.

The history of New Zealand meat export industry need not detain us too much here. Starting from the 1880s it rapidly outpaced wool and timber exports to become this country's largest commercial enterprise by the 1970s, although entirely reliant upon exports to the United Kingdom (of Great Britain) and its economic fortunes. In 1884 Premier Julius Vogel had explored the idea of exporting frozen meat to British India but officials had advised bluntly:

The frozen meat referred to would certainly find sale to a limited scale amongst Christian classes... but it will not find market amongst the other classes of people such as Parsees, Mahomedans, Jews, etc., as these classes of people will not touch

³⁴⁵ Yusuf Al Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (Al-Halal Wal Haram Fil Islam)*, (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1960), p.14.

³⁴⁶ For an extensive examination of the various rules and regulations regarding Halal food, see: Al Qaradawi, *The Lawful and the Prohibited in Islam (Al-Halal Wal Haram Fil Islam)*, pp.39-79.

any meat which is not killed by a Mahomedan moolah or by one of their castes.³⁴⁷

However the option was publicly revised and discussed from time to time. For example in 1924 the Wellington newspaper *The Evening Post* ran a curious article advocating the export of meat to Asia:

The tenets of the Mohammedan religion require that the meat they eat shall be killed in accordance with the rules laid down in the Koran. ... This difficulty can be overcome by recognised Mohammedan rulers sending mullahs (preachers) to superintend the killing and certifying on the label that the religious requirements have all been complied with.³⁴⁸

The introduction of halal slaughter and certification in the 1920s (before the formation of Muslim organisations or mosques inside this country) presents an intriguing historical ‘what-if’. The development of Islam in this country as a corollary of the expansion of halal slaughter during the interbellum may very well have given the faith and the Muslim community a very different shape and character. Such a scheme would have, presumably, seen the evolution of a network of small Muslim communities and mosques based in distinctly rural locations near livestock and freezing works. Ultimately British currency was more valued and this (and other) proposals were never followed up. However, when Britain joined the EEC the New Zealand Meat Producers Board was obliged to find serious alternative export markets. The Meat Board was a powerful statutory body representative of farmers’ commercial interests but it proved completely unable to cope with changes to the global economy and the pressure on New Zealand meat companies to find and access new international export markets.³⁴⁹

As far as I can determine, the earliest commercial halal slaughter inside New Zealand was undertaken in the 1960s when halal slaughtermen from Fiji were employed for small Middle Eastern contracts. Following changes to the management and commercial exploitation of local oil resources in the 1970s, the Middle East suddenly became important to New Zealand exporters and there was an explosion in trade. An official reported in 1981 that meat shipments to the Middle East have grown from just 300 tonnes over 1970-71 to around

³⁴⁷ ‘Development of Colonial Industries (Further Papers Relating to the)’, *Appendix to the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1885 Session I, H-15a, p. 18.

³⁴⁸ ‘The Meat Problem’, *Evening Post*, 23 February 1924, p. 13.

³⁴⁹ Deborah Gewertz and Frederick Errington, *Cheap Meat: Flap Food Nations in the Pacific Islands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), pp.53-71.

160,000 tonnes a decade later over 1980-81.³⁵⁰ There was a stream of visitors from Asia, the Middle East, Iran and North Africa throughout the 1970s, plus reciprocal Ministerial visits and tours by New Zealand politicians eager to access the new oil wealth there. The focus was entirely on economic opportunities rather than cultural exchanges or educational opportunities. Interestingly, before the Iranian revolution of 1979, there was never any official mention of halal slaughter at all. An official publication stated the point succinctly in a 1974 article focusing on the region: ‘The Middle East is an area New Zealand has neglected in the past – because there was no obvious political or economic reasons for involvement.’³⁵¹

In the 1970s the Egyptian embassy in Wellington authorised its own halal certificates for meat destined for Egypt. Similarly Saudi Arabia imported meat through an arrangement made between their ‘...embassy in Canberra in association with the New Zealand Chamber of Commerce.’³⁵² The details are vague and it is unclear, to this day, whether this meat was actually halal or not. Consequently there was a growing plethora of individuals and groups involved in issuing halal certificates for their own particular needs and purposes, few of them especially concerned with religious, theological or spiritual sensitivities. Mazhar Krasniqi, an Albanian businessman in Auckland involved in the New Zealand Muslim Association, took an active interest in the halal issue in the 1970s and met with the New Zealand Ambassador in Rome, Phil Holloway, on several occasions, but with meagre results. Essentially the Meat Board was happy with the chaos and reluctant to collaborate with the resident Muslim community. The Meat Board leadership had observed the brittle and inchoate vagaries of the development of the halal meat industry in Australia – and the complicated and truculent certification fee wrangles – with great alarm. They did not want a repeat of that experience in New Zealand and did not want to work with local Muslims.³⁵³ At the height of public debate on the issue of halal slaughter in 1979, Charles Hilgendorf, then chairman of New Zealand Meat Producers Board, stated publicly: ‘New Zealand-slaughtered meat met the requirements of the Koran probably better than in the Islamic countries.’³⁵⁴ His remark reveals two points. Firstly, the Meat Board clearly had a poor grasp of the issue of what halal slaughter actually was or was not. Secondly, it suggests

³⁵⁰ ‘Meat Exports to the Middle East’, *New Zealand Foreign Affairs Review (NZFAR)* Volume 31, Number 2, April-June 1981, p. 77.

³⁵¹ ‘New Zealand’s Developing Relations with the Middle East’, *NZFAR*, Volume 24, Number 2, February 1974, p. 20.

³⁵² Foo-Yuen Chun, ‘The Dynamics of the Halal Meat Trade in New Zealand and Australia’, *New Zealand and the Middle East*, ed. by Ron MacIntyre, (Christchurch 1987), p. 151.

³⁵³ Warren Berryman and John Draper, ‘Meat Exporters Resist Costly Islamic Crusade’, *NBR*, 9 May 1979, p. 1; Warren Berryman, ‘Insensitivities created Halal Meat Difficulties’, *NBR*, 19 December 1983, p. 13.

³⁵⁴ ‘Moslem Questions Methods of Slaughter in N.Z.’, *The Otago Daily Times*, 7 March 1979, p.9.

that the Board desperately wanted to convince both the New Zealand public and overseas Muslim consumers that they had the situation under control and that New Zealand meat was indeed halal.

During the 1970s New Zealand and Iran had slowly developed trade ties that involved the export of an increasing amount of frozen sheep meat, and important export orders and contracts rested on the Iranians importing mounting quantities. The Iranian Revolution changed everything. Previous visits by Iranian officials, including the Shahenshah in 1974 and his son in 1978, had emphasized trade and focused on entertaining the Shah or visitors with Maori rock music bands in Rotorua.³⁵⁵ This contrasted with the post-Revolutionary Iranian visitors who were much more sober and focused. Chun believes the NZ halal meat trade started with the Ayatollah Khomeini insisting on a strict application of the 'prescribed requirements of the Qur'an with regards to the killing of animals.'³⁵⁶ Following the Islamic revolution a Shia scholar, Hujjatalislam Mahdavi, led an Iranian meat inspection delegation in May 1979. He toured freezing works at Westfield, plus Fairton near Ashburton.³⁵⁷ I doubt there was any effort to entertain the learned Mullah, noted for his turban and ubiquitous palliament, with a Maori rock'n'roll band (although considering Hilgendorf's remarks quoted above and the general character of the Meat Board during this period it is impossible to rule this out either). Over July and August 1979 Ross Finlayson and a delegation from the Meat Exporters Council negotiated a deal with the Iranian Meat Organisation in Tehran for the export of New Zealand lamb. The discussions also outlined the recruitment and employment of Muslim men to be employed as halal slaughtermen at particular freezing works.³⁵⁸ In October 1979 a formal four-year minimum lamb contract of 200,000 tonnes was concluded between the Iranian Meat Organisation and the New Zealand Meat Producers Board. Iran became New Zealand's second largest lamb market.³⁵⁹ Consequently in 1979 fifteen local Muslims were employed to work in the original slaughterhouses, whilst the Iranian Meat Organisation recruited another fifteen from Iran. When the contract was expanded another six men were seconded from Iran.³⁶⁰

Interestingly, one of Mahdavi's earliest New Zealand employees was a Cantabrian convert to

³⁵⁵ 'Visit to New Zealand of the Crown Prince of Iran', *NZFAR*, Volume 28, Number 1 January-March 1978, p. 38.

³⁵⁶ Foo-Yuen Chun, 'The Dynamics of the Halal Meat Trade in New Zealand and Australia', *New Zealand and the Middle East*, p. 149.

³⁵⁷ Iranian Meat Delegation', *NZFAR*, Volume 29, Number 1 & 2, 1979, p. 35; 'Sheep Point Way to Trade', *NZH*, 10 May 1979, p. 1.

³⁵⁸ 'Hope for lamb', *Christchurch Star*, 21 November 1979, p. 3.

³⁵⁹ 'Meat Exports to the Middle East', *NZFAR*, Volume 31, Number 2, April-June 1981, p. 77.

³⁶⁰ Mathew Dick, 'Halal Exports Big Business for New Zealand', *Primary Industry Management*, Volume 5, Number 3, September 2002, p. 23.

Islam named Mohammed Farouk Roy French who worked in 1980-1982 at the freezing works in Islington. Almost all the halal slaughtermen employed in the South island for the first season were recruited in Iran. Others were Fiji-Indian or Asian immigrants. This makes French, who later served as Secretary to the Canterbury Muslim Association, most probably the first convert to Islam engaged in this line of work. In 1984 FIANZ secured its first annual halal meat certification contract with the New Zealand Meat Producers Board and Muhammed Yusuf was employed as the first FIANZ halal supervisor in the South Island. Yusuf was a Pakistani immigrant who had arrived in the 1970s, married to an English convert to Islam. In 1989 Yusuf stepped down and a local convert to Islam named Muhammad Al Harith Richards took over until 1990 when Farouk Roy French assumed the job.

Typical of the profound intransigence of New Zealand government officials and the Meat Board towards the halal issue and Muslim consumers is a curious 2004 story in the Christchurch *Press*. Journalist David McLaughlin was trawling through documents related to a 1974 visit to Libya by Phil Holloway, the New Zealand Ambassador in Rome (and accredited to many Mediterranean lands). It seems Holloway was surprised and disconcerted that the street signs in Tripoli were in Arabic and not English. A telex dated 15 July 1974 told Holloway in no uncertain terms that the meat presently being exported to Libya was categorically not halal but that this should not be mentioned to the Libyans.³⁶¹ A large part of the problem here, as identified and discussed at length by Chun, was that there was no real co-ordinating agency, office or framework.³⁶² To be blunt, there was neither a great public demand from Muslim consumers at the time to ensure meat imports were halal, nor was there much literature on the subject (for either Muslim or non-Muslim readers).

Publications: National Newsletter and Overseas Booklets

At the 30 August 1980 Special General Meeting of FIANZ a six man editorial board was established to run a modest community newsletter that was called variously *Al Muslim* (Arabic for 'the Muslim') or simply 'The Muslim'. Sometimes the Arabic transliteration was used alone, sometimes the English title, sometimes both simultaneously. Sometimes it was distributed under the titles 'FIANZ Bulletin' or 'FIANZ Circular'. Other titles were apparently suggested but were not adopted. The appellation *The Muslim* / *Al Muslim* persisted until the 1990s when the newsletter changed radically and the moniker was disused. Can the community newsletter inform us much about the identity rubric for both

³⁶¹ David McLaughlin, 'Libya 'deceived' over Halal Meat Shipment', *PR*, 11 August 2004, p. A8.

³⁶² Foo-Yuen Chun, 'The Dynamics of the Halal Meat Trade in New Zealand and Australia', *New Zealand and the Middle East*, p. 151.

readers and writers? Can it give us helpful hints about local Muslim experiences and the emergence of a new cultural identity? Much can be teased from community newsletters. There are narrative devices such as self-referential claims to historical precedents, theological authority, and the innate moral superiority customary to all religious literature. However it must be recalled that these documents were certainly never intended for non-Muslim readers and were never meant to serve directly as a type of guide to the inner workings of the Islamic community. If being Muslim meant cognisance of the continuum of Islam, community and personal identification, then the religious articles inside the FIANZ newsletters concerning various philanthropic ideals, venial and mortal sins, communal pursuits and projects and so forth, certainly constituted an ideal vehicle to mould readers' minds. Benedict Anderson has argued that 'imagined communities' are fostered and generated over time through a variety of means, and further that the widespread distribution of mass-produced literature written in the vernacular language of those who read this literature is an important part of this process. Anderson argued that nations were imagined communities, a socially constructed group, that came into existence directly because of the rise of 'print capitalism' where entrepreneurs and political leaders expressed themselves in the vernacular (rather than, say, Latin) through printed books, newspapers and other such media. Thus folk from different social and regional groups were able to communicate and negotiate a common discourse.³⁶³ Muslims in the South Island, and indeed all New Zealand, were very quick to establish local newsletters to perform exactly this task: to relay their own information about their religion, advise on approaching dates of religious significance and so forth.³⁶⁴ Had English become the common language of the entire Muslim population in this period? It is significant, given the diversity of races and nationalities that all communications in these newsletters are in English and that there is only a modest amount of Quranic Arabic employed. The fact that local Muslims were reading the same articles, discussing the same subjects and tackling the same questions and topics in a shared medium of lay writing means that the concerns of the communities were being widely disseminated and shared.

The Moroccan scholar Fatima Mernissi has written: 'Nothing is more programmed and

³⁶³ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1983).

³⁶⁴ For example, Muslim community histories (inside such newsletters) were often designed to bolster a particular agenda or interpretation, especially the legitimacy of an Association claim to represent all Muslims in their region. There were valiant and worthy efforts to be sure but facts were basically less valued as an accurate record of the past, than as a means to clarify or justify points and policies of mosque leaders. We have the further difficulty in that the main sources for such accounts were composed by those who chose to settle and those with a good command of English: not those transient workers who chose, ultimately, to leave, nor those unable to articulate their conceptualisations in the vernacular idiom of fluent English. Consequently such accounts must invariably offer a slightly slanted and idealized view of events and the individuals involved.

coded than the sources from which we draw our lies and fantasies.’ Depending on the circumstances and use, history can be employed to undermine or reinforce salient aspects of both a religion and a religious community. Whilst ethnic and religious identifications may be fluid and contextual, and are often negotiated and re-negotiated daily, the articulation of history disseminated through community agencies and organs (such as a newsletter) can be a useful tool in drawing folk of differing races and social classes together over a period of time. Community publications are always a product of their time and as such reveal much about the personal, religious and cultural choices of the writers and their intended audiences. The language employed for instance can be a powerful marker of intentions and identity, as much as cultural heritage, and communities (especially minorities) often try to mould and express complex ideas and goals into idealised shapes and forms. A common history (or a belief in such) can help foster a common sense of identity and belonging. In their simplicity, these newsletter and community published histories acquire a new quality and purpose, and become something probably unintended by the authors who compiled them. An academic reading of such material necessitates that we take in account the distance of time, intentions and broader cultural functions as we peruse the texts, and consider their meaning in accordance with the writer’s original goals. What kind of history did they seek to inculcate and preserve, and what can they inform us about the community that received them?³⁶⁵

While New Zealand society has always been diverse, the Muslim minority within it has always been more so. The FIANZ newsletters and internal correspondence however opted to downplay this innate diversity and the many layers of differences for the sake of emphasizing social cohesion of the *umma*. As Shepard eloquently summarised the matter: ‘loyalty to the umma should be put above loyalty to the clan.’³⁶⁶ This must have been a conscious decision of the editorial board. The inaugural editor, Mansoor Khawaja from Christchurch, who won people over with his polite friendliness in personal interactions, was competently aided by Ashraf Chaudhary and Khalid Rashid Sandhu (also both from Pakistan), Amin Farooqi and Hafiz Mohammed Ismail Sidat (both originally from Fiji), and Abdul / Abdur Rahman Khan (Bangladesh). By June 1981 three more characters had been drafted in to help with the rhetoric and balance of subjects in the *Al Muslim* newsletter: Ansur Rahman (India), Ghulam Irshad Abdur Razzaq Khan (Bangladesh) and Mohammed Sharif Mahdavi (the Shia cleric from Iran). Ghulam Irshad Abdur Razzaq Khan was an

³⁶⁵ Fatima Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy – Fear of the Modern World* (Reading: Virago Press, 1993), p.122.

³⁶⁶ William Shepard, *Introducing Islam* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 30.

influential Muslim who had grown up in New Zealand, son of the Bangladeshi history lecturer at Victoria University. Residing in Christchurch and Wellington alternately throughout the 1970s and 1980s, he participated in a programme of Dawah that saw not only the successful conversion to Islam of several local folk but also, more importantly, their continued adherence to Islam and a presence within the local Muslim communities over the following years. He worked hard to articulate a vision of Islam and Muslims in the *Al Muslim* newsletter that clearly impressed many within the Muslim minority at the time. Like a painting by Escher with its endlessly repeating imagery (where the real and the imagined are beautifully blended), his utopian vision of an idealised Muslim community still holds some appeal today amongst an older generation of Muslim immigrants.³⁶⁷

Carefully read, as literary devices (ignoring emblematic motifs and embedded narratives like much repeated Hadith) these FIANZ newsletters remain an important source of carefully recorded information about the Muslim community across New Zealand in the 1980s at least, and can provide useful insights into the community discussions. The FIANZ newsletter compendia (and some of the internal historical analyses in particular) helped in some part to both reflect its readership and also to construct a complex of identities that are recognisable and valid for local Muslims to this day. This is especially so for what is now the older generation. Khawaja, the inaugural editor, worked for Statistics New Zealand and the sense of precision in his approach to the texts of the *Al Muslim* are a delight to read. For readers and writers alike, local minority status was mitigated psychologically by the consistent invocations of an important trans- or supranational identity matrix. An age-old paradox faced by many creeds and many immigrants, Muslims were repeatedly encouraged to contemplate themselves as both Kiwis and simultaneously as part of an expansive international community of believers. Integration, trans-national encounters and social incorporation were encouraged, whilst a firm sense of adhering to ancient religious traditions was actively countenanced; the small size of the Muslim minority impelled the community to develop very close economic, social and educational ties with the surrounding population.

Curiously there is a super-abundance of material written within New Zealand rather than abroad. Pages are full of carefully composed religious articles and Khutbah, book reviews and histories of various regional Muslim Associations, demonstrating a broad range of perspectives and agendas. As ideas and tropes took on socio-cultural forms, the concept of revitalising Islam through ideals that originated outside of New Zealand was frequently articulated. For instance in 1984 Soraiya Gilmour, a Cantabrian convert to Islam and student at Canterbury University, wrote a page long book review of Sayyid Qutb's tome *In the*

³⁶⁷ Private correspondence, author's possession.

Shade of the Quran which she described as a ‘vigorous intellectual and practical campaign of struggle’ for Islam.³⁶⁸ Sometimes the newsletter contributors and rapporteurs directly contested ideas from abroad. For example Ayesha de Raadt, a Wellington convert to Islam and regular writer in the early 1980s, prepared a lengthy essay that stretched over three issues rebutting an overseas-printed booklet then being distributed in mosques, entitled *Ideal Woman in Islam*. A history graduate of Victoria University, de Raadt argued heatedly against this publications’ misogynist position that the role of Muslim women is to stay at home and have babies.³⁶⁹

Whilst this newsletter reveals convergences in its authors’ writing styles and methodologies, it also demonstrates their differences of opinions. There were both superficial and brittle articles from time to time, and texts written by New Zealand Muslims could express views and voices both confident and diffident, sometimes defensively so. What links, tropes and vignettes were being muted? For example, I note that whilst there is a lot of history examined and explored (from the biography of the Prophet Muhammad to useful, if brief, outlines of regional Muslim communities within New Zealand), there is no effort to discuss historiography and the fundamental philosophical theories underlying such historical excursions. Izetbegovic wrote: ‘Islam is, and should be, a permanent searching through history for a state of inwards and outward balance.’³⁷⁰ This is concerning as a firm comprehension of interpretation is critical to really understanding past events. E. H. Carr wrote: ‘The evolving interpretation of the past is a necessary function of history.’³⁷¹ A community that does not appreciate the role of interpretation in the presentation of historical material runs the risk of a degree of myopia concerning such events. One of my favourite articles remains an emotionally charged critique of Shepard’s chapter about Muslims in New Zealand, inside a book entitled *Indians in New Zealand*.³⁷² Having dismissed the brief introductory summaries of Islam by the Canterbury University academic as ‘confusing and irritating’ Khan alleges valiantly:

If Dr. Sheppard [sic] had probed the matter a bit further, he would have discovered a

³⁶⁸ Soraiya Gilmour, ‘Book Review’, *The Muslim (New Zealand)*, Volume 2, Number 4, December 1984, p.23.

³⁶⁹ Ayesha de Raadt, ‘A Critical Reply to Mohd. Imran’s Book’, *The Muslim*, Volume 2, Number 3, pp.11-13; and Ayesha de Raadt, ‘A Critical Reply to Mohd. Imran’s Book’, *The Muslim*, Volume 2, Number 4, pp. 5-7. (Regrettably I have been unable to locate a copy of the offending pamphlet. It may well be out of circulation. One certainly hopes so.)

³⁷⁰ Alija Izetbegovic, *Islam between East and West* (Plainfield, Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1993), p. xxxii.

³⁷¹ E. H. Carr, *What is History* (Second Edition), (London: Penguin, 1987), p.121.

³⁷² William Shepard, ‘The Muslim Community in New Zealand’, Chapter 5 in *Indians in New Zealand: Studies in a Sub Culture*, ed. Kapil N. Tiwari (Wellington, N.Z.: Price-Milburn, 1980), pp. 139-162.

new synthesis, that of a New Zealand Muslim. The formation of the Federation in 1979 is clearly an indication that the Muslim community has long past the phase of being *in* New Zealand and is now manifestly *of* New Zealand.³⁷³

Bold words; but are they accurate? They came only a year after the same newsletter had in fact stated the opposite position (again, reflecting a diversity of opinions). Perchance Khan's vision was overly optimistic. Is this one of Belich's 'self-actualising myths'?³⁷⁴ Governor George Grey's 1852 comments about Pakeha and Maori forming 'one harmonious community' spring to mind. Khan appears to be proposing a new actuality that he claimed appeared from a singular societal process and a common notion of a shared faith. This article (and others) were not intended as semantic sports and similar ideas were articulated throughout the 1980s. Like Herodotus – contrasting the Barbarian hordes of Persia to the noble but numerically smaller Greek civilisation – Khan is almost trying to foster a new collective identity through a comparison with the dominant non-Muslim society that appeared to envelop the new Muslim migrants here.

By the late 1990s the subject-matter of the newsletters became banal, highlighting the various FIANZ presidents and the affairs of the Federation management rather than the wider, growing Muslim population. Tellingly, the title '*Al Muslim*' was dropped and the publication as simply printed as 'The FIANZ Newsletter' and variations along that line. Publication (in terms of dates, size, form and content), often irregular after Khawaja left, became even more erratic.

However, one noteworthy linguistic feature of the 1980s FIANZ newsletters (and internal communications) concerns the use of the term '*ummah*' to designate the New Zealand Muslim community, rather than any other appellation. This perhaps might be expected from a theologically motivated agency whose publications underscored the Universalist nature of the Islamic faith. In traditional discourse *ummah* denotes the worldwide religious body of Muslims and in this context emphasizes the supra-national nature of the (perceived) New Zealand Muslim community. Many Islamic scholars however will argue that Muslims in New Zealand cannot constitute a stand-alone *ummah* and that use of the term is fundamentally inaccurate, if popular nevertheless. (Indeed Muslim minorities across English speaking Western societies invariably employ this term).³⁷⁵ Shepard points out that strictly

³⁷³ A. Rahman Khan, 'Muslims in New Zealand: A Review', *The Muslim*, Volume 1, Number 2, February 1981, pp 12-13.

³⁷⁴ James Belich, *Making Peoples* (Auckland: Allen Lane / Penguin, 1996), p. 358.

³⁷⁵ One alternative could be '*al-amma*' or the common people, although this carries some class connotations. The noun '*jumhur*' also springs to mind as this denotes the general public (the *Hoi*

speaking the word refers to the ‘nation of Muslims worldwide’.³⁷⁶ The widespread utilisation of the word *ummah* signalled the intentions of the vanguard of Islam in New Zealand and also projected some measure of the concurrence of their spiritual hopes here. *Ummah* denotes a clearly idealised community of believers (as opposed to an immigrant social or societal grouping) and has an ever so slightly more noble and Quranic resonance.³⁷⁷ Nowhere is the term ‘Muslim minority’ employed. Overall *Al Muslim* newsletters accentuated the spiritual and ethical aspects and goals from the beginning, as well as taking up popular political causes, such as anti-apartheidism. Some essays explored issues leading to a conjecture of moral superiority over non-Muslims or at least some relativity towards the *nasara* (Nazarenes or Christians), and thereby serving to critique the surrounding society. Thus, through juxtaposing themselves with ‘the other’, localised Muslims were able to define themselves in curiously much the same way as the British settlers and Pakeha had defined themselves in relation or contradistinction to the Maori in the nineteenth century.³⁷⁸

Via these various literary styles and subject matters, the newsletter chronicles were able to strenuously champion the cause of Muslim unity within New Zealand in a consistent way. A keen observer might well comment that such appeals did not fall randomly from the sky but emanated from an inexorable need as perceived by community leaders. In turn this raises the very real question of whether Muslim immigrants and refugees did or did not accept and acknowledge FIANZ leadership as sufficiently ‘Islamic’ in knowledge and practice, and able thereby to proffer spiritual guidance or play out other roles as lay leaders in local communities. With regard to the newsletters of the Islamic Federation the textual portrait is further complicated when we contemplate the verbal strategies by which Muslim communal leaders articulated or justified their actions, policies and ideas as capable, if somewhat ambiguously, situated commentators through the newsletters.

The remains and relics of once grand empires have notoriously inspired loquacious historical visions and motivated humankind to seriously contemplate the conundrum of history itself. However the case for precision in history is primarily a stylistic one. It is to some degree

Polloi or the masses) and may have been more accurate term to use in some of the articles. The verb *Jamhara* means ‘gathering together’ and as such *Jumhur* is the core linguistic root word of the Arabic term for a political republic: *jumhuriyah*. It is related to the Arabic word *Jama*, congregation.

Harafish (rabble) might be an accurate aside on occasion but would cause offence. See: Muhammad ibn Mukarram Ibn Manzur, *Lisan al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar Sadir, 1883), Volume 4, p.149.

³⁷⁶ Shepard, *Introducing Islam*, p.303.

³⁷⁷ Esposito, *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 327.

³⁷⁸ See: G. I. Abdur Razzaq Khan ‘Nasraniyah and Islam: The Need for a Greater Understanding’, *The Muslim*, Volume 1, Number 2, February 1981, pp.4-6; and also Abdur Rahman Khan ‘Islam and Christianity in the Modern World: Proceedings of the First Seminar on Islam in New Zealand’, *The Muslim*, Volume 1, Number 3, June 1981, pp.15-16.

axiomatic when examining and recounting history and folk often forget issues when they are overly influenced by subsequent events. In the lemma of a collation of facts regarding the first decade of the Islamic Federation, it can be acknowledged that it was set up with meticulously good intentions, persuasive arguments and a great deal of genuine communal goodwill. The basic idea was to unite the Muslim folk in the country together into one outfit and provide national leadership and some measure of official representation – an issue that in some senses has been the centre of Islamic leadership problems since the death of the Prophet himself over 1400 years ago. Read overall, the FIANZ achievements in the field of halal certification and the regular newsletters of the 1980s serve to remind us of the implicit and subtle interface of modernity and Islam in New Zealand; this in turn compels a measure of cognisance that the faith is not as exotic and ungainly or as impractical as harsher critics and detractors would suggest.

Conclusion

The principle aim of this chapter is to elucidate the role of Canterbury Muslims in the creation of the national Muslim body, the Islamic Federation, in 1979; the early years of the halal meat trade and the evolution of halal certification; and to flesh out the role and significance of Islamic publications. The Islamic faith is flexible and supple, and to quote Fredrik Barth: ‘some cultural features are used by the actors as signals and emblems of differences, others ignored, and in some relationships radical differences are played down and denied.’³⁷⁹ The basic idea of Kara, Khawaja, Quazi and others, in 1977, was to unite all the Muslim folk of the region together into one outfit, regardless of ethnicity or language, education or class, and to provide some degree of provincial leadership and official representation. The objectives of Quazi, Krasniqi and others in 1979 was essentially to undertake the same project but on a national scale. These purposes, indeed, have been at the centre of issues concerning Islamic leadership since the death of the Prophet Muhammed himself over 1400 years ago. However, was this purpose sufficient and was the fledgling community resilient enough to survive the necessary pressures needed to flower and prosper inside New Zealand?

For the first five years the Islamic Federation was embroiled in disputes with the New Zealand Meat Producers Board over halal certification. The Meat Board was keenly aware of how significant the halal issue was to New Zealand meat exports and trade in the Middle East and other international Muslim markets. Did this affect Canterbury Muslim politics? It would seem not and the communal unity evinced there is a testament to the success of the

³⁷⁹ Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries. The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1969), p. 14.

'asabiyyah as a principle drawing folk together from differing lands, with disparate perspectives and priorities. A second query derives from the fundamental functional characteristics and aesthetic features of a Muslim Association (once set up): what is the primary purpose and methodology of the organisation? How successful were they in terms of Dawah? There were many conversions to Islam during this period, a point often celebrated in the newsletters for instance, but issues of backsliding (falling away or relapsing to a previous faith) or retention are never discussed publicly either in Muslim publications or community meetings. Why?

The Muslim Association of Canterbury and FIANZ both aimed to implement spiritual goals through the application of temporal rules, and successfully created a specific space – both physically (in the long run) and intellectually (through the newsletter, most notably) – where Muslim migrants, refugees and converts would pray and mingle more regularly. It should also be remembered that in many respects Muslims in New Zealand in the late twentieth century benefited from a socially tolerant environment compared to other immigrant destinations. Kolig sums it up nicely:

In the ideological make-up of today's New Zealand, with its superficial predominance of diffuse tolerance, some of it ideologically underpinned and some purely based on vague indifference, a variety of features interact: post-modernist cultural relativism, its formalised product 'political correctness', Orientalism and old fashioned xenophobia.³⁸⁰

Kolig goes on to comment on the vague official multi-culturalism of this land that has evolved in recent decades, with more guarded words, pointing out (sensibly enough) that tolerating differences between ethnic and religious groups may actually slow down or impede successful integration and may unintentionally institute or formalise degrees of marginalisation not fully anticipated or comprehended by the host society. Blind tolerance of diversity may increase, amplify and perpetuate social dissimilarities and create or foster a subculture of unhappy isolated parallel communities '...united by nothing more than physical proximity and nominal citizenship.'³⁸¹ By creating the Association the Muslim leadership aimed to enrol as many local resident Muslims as possible as members (irrespective of *Madhhab* or other differences) and since it would come to represent organisational or 'authoritative' Islam, formal membership meant or implied a general

³⁸⁰ Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism (Muslim Minorities)*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 62.

³⁸¹ Erich Kolig, *New Zealand's Muslims and Multiculturalism* (2009), p. 76.

agreement with the interpretation and comprehension of the faith by the incumbent hierarchy. This ideal was demonstrated in the united approach to the issue of halal certification for example, in the 1980s. The configuration of the Islamic Federation has similar but more nation-wide objectives. I suggest that, implicit in these circumstances and strategies, it was perceived that a carefully nuanced balance of Islamic religiosity would allow the local Muslim minority to raise the profile of Islam in a positive manner and create a mechanism for regulating the Muslim community's affairs in concordance with Western or Occidental legal norms whilst preserving the essential existential points of difference.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Conclusion:

Muslim Group Solidarity in the South Island

Introduction

The aim of this thesis has been to examine the history of South Island Muslims between the 1850s to the late 20th century, the first one hundred plus years of Muslim immigration and settlement, and to explore the role of *'asabiyyah* or group solidarity. This study has sought to seek answers to the following questions: who were the earliest Muslim settlers? What were their social classes, professions and religious beliefs? How and why did they adapt their conceptualization of Islam to a non-Muslim social environment? Did the decision to set up a Muslim organisation, and later build a mosque, have a national impetus or regional? What kind of stimuli or shared consciousness motivated them? What did Dawah play in the unfolding or conceptualizing of events and issues? What were the effects of Islam on the lives of ordinary Muslims? I believe a detailed study elucidates a multiplicity of motivations and interests, but also exemplifies the methods employed by provincial Muslims, their expectations and perceptions of Islam.

This thesis has presented new evidence of Muslim minority history through an examination of the biographies of several Muslim immigrants (and their families) in the South Island of New Zealand. It has highlighted the historical evolution and roots of the community that had emerged sufficiently by the 1970s to create, in 1977, the first formal Islamic organisation in this part of the country, one that in very short time erected the first mosque here as well. Such an investigation has underscored the low profile and historic invisibility of non-Pakeha and non-Maori communities based on a perceived bicultural past that to some extent excludes Asian and African minorities and ignores or downplays religious ones. Establishing a Muslim presence, in terms of Wuzerah settling in Canterbury, within fifteen years of the Treaty of Waitangi is therefore critical. This crucial point evinces the idea of a more complex and more racially and religiously diverse past in New Zealand than hitherto understood or acknowledged. This has the potential to reshape public discourse and comprehension of New Zealand history, and also has significant implications for the treatment and inclusion of religious minorities within contemporary New Zealand. There may also be implications for public policy aimed at integration and even laws designed to increase social cohesion and reduce ethnic tensions and discrimination. As such, the research

identifies new avenues and highlights areas in which current history is deficient. It demonstrates that much of contemporary New Zealand history still has not taken on board recent research on religious practices within the land.

In this thesis I examined the arrival of the first Muslims to New Zealand and the various stories and evidence related to this, from the traditional accounts of the 1874 Chinese goldminers in Otago to the lascars on European ships exploring the coast. I established that the first Muslim family to settle in this country permanently was that of Wuzerah from the Indian subcontinent, who arrived in the employ of Sir John Cracroft Wilson in 1854; in short, this migration of Muslim individuals was intimately linked to the expansion of the British Empire in the South Pacific. Modern New Zealand is built on a secular political framework but informed by Anglo-European Christian social and cultural values. The evidence in newspaper accounts and court cases relay a great deal of real sympathy for individual Muslims at odds with the racist legislation of the era. Growing numbers of resident Muslims from the 1950s led to the creation of the Muslim Association of Canterbury in 1977. The central role of the Kara brothers was explored illustrating the continuity of some personnel from the period before communal links were able to be forged across the various social and societal boundaries. The community, and later the registered Muslim Association, were Sunni. There is evidence that Shia and other Muslim minority groups were present, but these did not actively participate in the Muslim Association administration.

Foreign students and local converts to the faith made quite an impression during this period; both brought enthusiasm and a comprehension of the Western education system. The first recorded presence of the *Tablighi Jamaat* in the South Island followed the acquisition of the Phillipstown Islamic Centre in 1980. This Islamic Centre quickly became crowded and efforts were initiated to build a proper mosque. A property was acquired early in 1982 in Riccarton and the *Masjid Al-Noor* constructed over 1984 and 1985. Much of the credit is attributed to Salih Al Samahy, a Saudi medical student and an African tertiary student prepared the calligraphic decorations inside the mosque. To some extent the events of the 1970s in the Muslim community reflect the idea of '*asabiyyah*' at the regional level and the formation of FIANZ in 1979, as '*asabiyyah*' at the national level. The functioning Muslim Association and mosque allowed South Island Muslims to circumvent the usual media stereotypes and pejorative impressions, to some degree, and project their own narratives: mosque open days, Muslim youth conferences, overseas visiting speakers, photographic and Islamic art exhibitions, the distribution of Islamic literature, television appearances and radio interviews, and so forth. Ultimately, however, the '*asabiyyah*' or group solidarity that had

brought the Muslims of Canterbury together in the 1970s was not enough to unite the community after the mosque was completed in 1985 and the failure to anticipate or prepare for fractious disagreements, court cases or serious divisions, contributed to ongoing problems inside the mosque in the 1990s and 2000s. The Muslim Association of Canterbury is still a functioning organisation in 2016 but the disruptions of the preceding twenty years still weigh heavily on Cantabrian Muslims.

From Mahometans to Muslims

One of the issues of interest has been the elasticity and layers of identity and the markers employed to classify individuals and groups. Anglo-European settlers and Pakeha have variously mislabeled Muslim immigrants, both in terms of ethnicity and faith.³⁸² However, it must be acknowledged that many Muslims have also re-defined themselves in New Zealand. Sultan and Sali Mahomet from Turkmenistan have variously been described – and have described themselves – as Assyrians, Indian and Ceylonese (Sri Lankan). Akif Keskin from Macedonia told everyone he was Turkish and even Albanian immigrants believed he was really Albanian. One of the most curious label changes though, has been the very title of the religion. In nineteenth century New Zealand Muslims were called ‘Mahometan’ or ‘Mohometan’ (or variant spellings of that word) or ‘Mussulman’. In various court cases we have seen Muslims in New Zealand accept and embrace the appellation ‘Mahometan’ without challenge or dispute. Very possibly this was because English was not their first language and most would have been unaware of alternative options in this matter. Indeed, various newspaper articles of the period have articulated a vision of England as ‘the greatest Mohometan power in the world.’³⁸³ So the term, used in various forms in English since the sixteenth century, was not automatically a negative epithet or insulting. In fact the English use of the word is derived from Latin *Mahometanus*, derived in turn from the Medieval Latin *Mahometus* (Muhammad). The adjective does imply, however, that Muslims understand or follow Mahomet (Muhammed) in the same or similar manner that most Christians comprehend and conceptualise Jesus. After World War Two this changed to ‘Muslim’ and today the word is considered extremely archaic by scholars and many Muslim intellectuals. However, Gibb reminds us ‘in a less self-conscious age Muslims were proud to call their community *al-umma al-Muhammadiyah*.’³⁸⁴ One wonders, had the Muslim Association of

³⁸² Even European Muslims from Bosnia were mislabelled ‘Armenians’ in the 1900s. See: Abdullah Drury, ‘Mostly Harmless’, *Waikato Islamic Studies Review*, Volume 1, Number 1, March 2015, p. 38; Fikret Karčić, ‘Prvi Bošnjaci na Novom Zelandu’, *Oslobođenje* (4 April, 2015), p. 29; Abdullah Drury, ‘Ramadan and Eid Blend Discipline with Celebration’, *Indian Newslink* (15 July 2015), p. 22.

³⁸³ ‘Passing Notes’, *Otago Daily Times*, 10 April 1878, p. 2.

³⁸⁴ H.A.R. Gibb, *Mohammedanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), p.2; For instance, when the Turkish Sultan Mehmed II reformed his army along modern European lines in 1826 he branded it the *Asakir-i Mansure-i Muhammediyye* (literally ‘Soldiers of Victory of Muhammad’).

Canterbury been set up in 1877 rather than 1977, if the entity would have started as the 'Mahometan Association' instead?

The Implications of 'Asabiyyah

In many respects the local Muslim community resembled an extended family or perhaps a clan or a tribe: sometimes functional, sometimes dysfunctional, with individuals drifting in and out constantly. Always bound however, and always connected to both the wider non-Muslim society around them and the broader Islamic world offshore. It is impossible to tackle all the issues in greater detail but Islam as a faith encourages family values and ties, whilst faith and religious zeal offer and excite hope, tranquillity, and also inner strength. The Muslim community over this period resembles the wider New Zealand society: a complex kaleidoscopic interaction of sub-communities (or subcultures) resembling a sometimes rambunctious collection of idealistic busybodies. Communities are not automatically causative agencies, as they are often internally structured and differentiated by capacity, however, as we have witnessed in the formation of the Association and erection of the mosque, they can be. Ideally a Muslim gentleman's unflinching code of personal honour was based on his private piety and his sense of duty to God and the community (Muslim and non-Muslim). Within New Zealand the celebrated heroes of Muslim history and models of Islamic behaviour (for Muslims) are invariably men of piety and great faith: the prophet Muhammed himself but also the *Sahaba* or Companions (or contemporaries) of Muhammed. Thereafter there is little agreement, with the exception of a few opaque references to men of action like Avicenna from time to time.³⁸⁵ This is doubly ironic as the Quran incessantly makes an appeal for a keen study and understanding of the past. In *Surat Ar-Rum*, (chapter of the Romans), Muslims are admonished:

Have they not travelled the land and seen the nature of the consequences for those who were before them? (Quran 30:9)³⁸⁶

There is a common theme and resonance here, and that is that Muslims should study history. There are, naturally, serious existential questions to be asked as to whether the Muslim Association (as a sectarian organisation) really does constitute or can fully represent a minority religious community. Is identity primarily sub-national and ethnically focused? Or supranational and universal or internationalist (i.e. pan-Islamic)?

³⁸⁵ Ibn Sina, *The Muslim (N.Z.)*, Volume 3 (1), June 1985, pp.27-28.

³⁸⁶ Mohd. Marmauduke Pickthall, *The Holy Qur'an Transliteration in Roman Script* (New Delhi: Kutub Khana Ishayat-ul-Islam, 2002), p.398; A similar sentiment is articulated clearly in Surah al Fatir, verse 44; Surat Ghafir, verses 21 and 82; Surat Al-'An'am, verse 1; Surah Yusuf, verse 109; and Surat Muhammad, verse 10.

To date, no scholar has fruitfully set forth a universally accepted framework within which all the main historical features or historiographical points of the New Zealand Muslim population can or will submit entirely. There is probably more motivation in the other direction and when the reader defines and discusses any particular conceptualisation of religion, he or she is creating (or contributing towards the creation or maintenance of) a social reality through which social categorization is manifested. The nineteenth century witnessed the first known arrival of Muslims and the basic social issues: immigration and isolation. The history of Islam in New Zealand is a history of settlement, almost colonisation or at least participation in the colonisation of this land. The heroes were the quiet pious Muslims who maintained their faith privately, as best they could in a minority scenario, with no social, external or institutional support. However the twentieth century was the real crucible of the Muslim communal identity here: the fundamental issues crystalized into those of the maintenance of faith and the efforts to construct and buttress a common identity and Islamic institutions. Culturally the progressive secularism that shaped New Zealand society (or the dominant British colonial component of that society) in the nineteenth century and over the twentieth century was either indifferent or hostile towards religion and belief. Consequently, secularists tend to relate to Muslims on every level (race, language, income and so forth) except matters of faith and interpretation of such. Hopefully this thesis has demonstrated that for the most part Muslim migrants and settlers did not leave their religious identities and spiritual values behind in the old country; they may have hidden or obscured their theological distinctions from mainstream non-Muslim society but almost all have manifested their faith one way or another.

This thesis has also made a significant contribution to the understanding of Muslim communal history within the developing New Zealand social context, and has highlighted some of the challenges faced by Muslim immigrants and refugees on the path to integration, in overcoming discrimination and achieving recognition and accommodation within the wider society. It is hoped that this study of the history of Muslims in the South Island will have positive ramifications, both for themselves and treatment of other religious minorities in New Zealand. This may also help New Zealand advance its own diversity policies and aspirations.

The wider Muslim community in New Zealand today is arguably one of New Zealand's most diverse religious communities (in terms of the multiplicity of races, languages and nationalities), and hence serves well as a useful case study and microcosm through which an analysis of *'asabiyyah* can be applied. It arguably contains the broadest racial and linguistic heterogeneity of all New Zealand's confessional groups. An examination of the Muslim

presence and settlement has revealed a previously invisible, or extremely low-key, page of New Zealand history that adds a significant chapter to minority contributions to the founding of the modern state. Such an addition enhances contemporary historical discourse and questions many basic assumptions about the bicultural nature of the century studied. This should allow more inclusive histories to be written in the future. An in-depth elucidation of the historical Muslim presence has exposed a stark contrast between racist or racist legislation and a broad measure of sympathy and even respect at the more mundane, grassroots level of daily human interactions. Whilst critics might point to anti-Asian laws and sentiments between the 1890s and 1920s, we note these were not directed at Muslims and there were no formal restrictions on Islam. In fact, almost all the Asian immigrant men in this study, ultimately, married Pakeha wives and I suspect that speaks volumes about the reality and the complexity of Pakeha attitudes during this era.

Reviewing the Canterbury mosque construction over 1984 and 1985 can provide many clues about communal values and priorities that thrived in the preceding years and brought about its creation. The decision to establish a proper mosque in Canterbury was entirely led by regional actors, although it was aided substantially by a large overseas donation. Although architecture may be a poor measure of personal or group religiosity, it can lend itself to a recollection and encirclement of the fragmentary images of human memory: particularly the collective memory and identity that underpin the cohesion of specific social groups. It may be understood as a visible manifestation and expression of the ideas and ideals, the beliefs and philosophies, and the over-riding ambitions and goals of the community concerned. Fundamentally, the purpose of mosque architecture is to establish a special space that inspire folk through prayer, contemplation and also dialogue. It could be said that ideally a mosque gives visual form to the regional presence of local Muslims: demarcating their territories and spaces amongst their Christian (and not so Christian) neighbours. Copious research on the subject of comparative religion has emphasized the intimate ties and confluences between Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and architecture possesses and manifests a language of its own that requires examination and interpretation. In New Zealand the Islamic prayer hall serves and represents the societal consensus of the broader Islamic minority. It identifies and confirms commonalities and not differences.

As implausible and contradictory as it may first appear, it is possible that places like Canterbury are more representative of the character of Muslim life and society in New Zealand than Auckland (where most Muslims currently reside). This character is such a complex compound of different and evolving elements that is challenging to describe adequately. Anthropologists would probably note that whilst members of the New Zealand

Muslim minority have a well-developed sense of sharing a geographic locality and space with other citizens and socio-religious groups, they also have a poorer sense of their own communal history and their exact differences with other folk groups.

The Canterbury colony of the nineteenth century was a plural, complex society in many respects and an excellent microcosm of New Zealand which was, after all, a society of immigrants at this time. India was central to the British Empire (economically, politically and militarily) and New Zealand newspapers of the period (even obscure provincial ones of limited circulation and rural readership) devoted a disproportionate amount of column space to detailed news reports from or about India. Certainly this has played some part in shaping the perceptions of Indians and Asians (and by extension, Muslims) by those who controlled and read newspapers (an important resource in this thesis). In any event there has not been enough public acknowledgement of the fact that historic Muslim immigration from other regions of the British Empire has played a role in the development and emergence of New Zealand as a nation. Overall, ethnic Indians have always been the New Zealand Muslim community's largest internal minority, but because of the heterogeneity of the term 'Indian' I am not entirely sure exactly what that means or entails. Sali Mahomet from Turkmenistan demonstrated well the ambiguity of Asian identity when he variously identified himself at different stage sin his life as Punjabi or Ceylonese, but then is directly quoted at one point denying he was Indian, at different stages in his life. Perhaps the *ummah*, being as broad as it was (is), allows for this degree of digression? Theological elaborations aside, the interpretation of Muslim inter-personal connections and relationships are exceptionally difficult to establish beyond known family units. Detailed examination has uncovered no interaction or communal spiritual activities of any type between individual Muslim migrants in the South Island before the 1960s. To some extent religious affiliation and identity can be contextual and individuals may well construct their own cultural self-identity based on their own needs, aspirations and education as with Akif Keskin in Dunedin. The historic theoretical tensions that exist between the individual and his or her personal identity as a Muslim or an Indian (or indeed any ethnic minority) are difficult to negotiate or determine with any great accuracy. The contemporary impress of ethnic Indian numerical supremacy within the Auckland Muslim community is extremely deceptive and has led many to conclude that persons from the Indian subcontinent still constitute a point blank majority in all Islamic congregations across the entire country. However, we may remain cautious about the significance (if any) of the fact that ethnic Indians composed a meaningful majority of South Island Muslims.

The macro-interdependency of theology and race and issues of integration, assimilation and

identity construction have been both central and peripheral to my inquiry, paradoxically perhaps. These matters have been at the heart of much of the history of New Zealand Muslims and many events, activities and policies would be meaningless otherwise. However my focus has been on the chronology and evolution of these affairs, issues and decisions and their ultimate significance. All faiths contain some liminal dichotomy and tension between transcendent and immanent notions of the Almighty: is He far away, above us and remote from our daily lives? Or is He constantly present, visible or discernible in the ordinary world around us? The immanent perspective probably suits settled folk: God is everywhere, in the beauty of the sunset on a familiar landscape and the peaceful faces of loved ones, and so forth. Some scholars have argued that religions that place greater stress on the immanent qualities of the Almighty are more likely to found in geographically well-protected or isolated regions of the world. On the other hand those folk from less protected regions, tend towards transcendent views.³⁸⁷ People who are migrants or refugees (having experienced the psychologically dislocating insecurities and instabilities associated with exile and or the migration process) probably relate more to a transcendent idea of God being totally inscrutable or enigmatic and perceive His Will as almost unknowable. This undoubtedly has had some impact on the expectations and anticipations of Muslim migrants in Canterbury. How much exactly, is less clear. Different migrants had, obviously, different experiences and offered different solutions to different conundra. To some extent religion can permit and aid migrants to pursue new employment opportunities inside new social structures, and allows individuals to seek new means of integration (concretely or mentally) into new social networks at local, regional and national levels. The identity of such folk becomes multi-faceted, hybrid and above all fluid. Although Islam still posits Arabia as an identity reference for many (indeed the central one for most Muslims) in a sense New Zealand's territories and urban spaces are slowly but actively being appropriated by migrants.

One of the challenges facing every researcher examining religious data and minority communities is demarcating between formal written theological claims to universal authority on the one hand and the mundane reality of life. This is apparent when reading these universalist discourses in relation to the local folk when identity is a social practice both situational and associational (for the individual and the group). This raw material now offers the reader a special and unique insight into the history of the Muslim community of the South Island. Another main challenge of studies of New Zealand Islam and New Zealand Muslims in particular, as currently configured, is that it remains a relatively niche area of scholarship: academics exploring this field are always drawn from disparate disciplines employing a plethora of methodologies. (William Shepard for example specialized in

³⁸⁷ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968).

religious studies, Erich Kolig in anthropology, and so forth). Secondly there is a paucity of serious objective academic interest by local resident Muslims into the subject: when Dr Ghazala Anwar organised the 2006 Symposium on Islam in New Zealand at the Canterbury University the Muslim attendees were outnumbered by non-Muslims four to one. Furthermore an ongoing challenge facing students of New Zealand Muslim communal history is the widespread lack of serious interest in the subject itself amongst most Muslim immigrants. The presence of well-educated Muslims and scholars fails to inspire much curiosity in their antecedents, predecessors or earlier generations of migrants. There is no appreciation for the complexities of historiography or the idea that a careful examination or analysis of past events could produce practical guidance for the present. Rather there remains a sense that such views and information might be better ignored or suppressed.

Whether secular or religious, leadership, or the absence thereof, has been a critical point of concern for this thesis. Leadership is often defined simply as the power or ability to lead other people but inside a liberal society such as New Zealand, the consent of the led can also be an axiomatic factor in community behaviour. It is evident that there have been many Muslims engaged around the periphery of New Zealand society for many decades, but it was only with the leadership proffered by Dr Quazi, Khawaja, the Kara brothers and others in the 1970s, that any sense of joint Islamic community developed. I would contend that the Muslim Association of Canterbury, as a registered and legal institution (and in many respects the centre of organised Muslim communal life), is itself just as potent a symbol of living Islam as the mosque in Riccarton or the old Islamic Centre on Tuam Street. It has been the fundament of every important Muslim community event in the area since 1977. Here, history and religion have collided and colluded. By definition, a Muslim Association is almost exactly the opposite of the religio-culture 'vacuum' that preceded it. It was structured to be a fixed ongoing project serving the needs of a small distinct minority. The strength, the specific historical weight and meaning, and to a certain extent the 'power' of the Association stemmed from the fact that it was designed for a handful of people. One issue that becomes apparent or relevant from the 1970s onwards is that of 'consociationalism' or power-sharing by allocating collective rights to specific groups. Different groups within the Association would slowly evolve and one of the primary challenges facing Muslims across the country has always been that how to involve and incorporate these porous and often itinerant factions, the slippery segments of any society (students and peripatetic halal slaughtermen, or labourers for instance).

FIANZ struggled for many years to finance its activities and it was not until 1985 that a source of revenue, through halal certification, was secured. Ulema (Islamic clergy) recruited

from abroad started arriving in New Zealand from 1960 but there was no full time Mullah in the South Island until the late 1990s. However, the absence of a strong, well-resourced and powerful national Islamic organisation or Ulema (or indeed, singular, a Mullah) did not seem to hamper the emergence of the Muslim community and what was a decisive factor in the facilitation of a central agency to regulate and represent the Islamic population was the operational cohesion of the embryonic Muslim migrant community leadership. This cohesion imparted by a shared locality, education, common experiences and expectations. Formal and legal organisation came to replace informal and ad hoc arrangements.

Prognostications about the degree of influence of sectarian beliefs, views or prejudices vary widely and wildly. It is a question often asked but never fully answered. In the absence of any clear personal statements or documents we have no clear resolutions here; the degree of overseas influence on the private religious beliefs of Muslim immigrants is almost intangible if not entirely nebulous. Can the fact that Butterdean wore a turban to court in the 1870s or that Sali Mahomet kept and read a copy of the Quran be interpreted seriously as a proper theological and intellectual feint? Or do these and other similar bits and pieces represent a type of cerebral vault of ideas inside any given Muslim household?

Perhaps the best way to analyse New Zealand Muslim group behavior and conduct, or aspects of *'asabiyyah* (community solidarity), is to move away from considering cultures as entirely immutable entities or polities and instead explore the interface, the interconnectedness and interdependency that exists between migrant, refugee and convert groups? Intermarriage (and the corollary, communal miscegenation) between Muslim immigrants and both local Maori and Pakeha did not, in the past, lead to the creation of a nascent indigenous Muslim identity. Rather, familial integration lead entirely to the assimilation of the children of such unions into mainstream non-Muslim society. However, conversions to Islam by the 1970s underscored the ability of religion to disturb and perturb previous comprehensions of socio-political relationships, replete with both internal and external ambiguities, distinctions and inner complexities. Ultimately, religious beliefs and practices (crucial or otherwise) are frequently the way that folk can root their personal and group identity into an idea or world view that they perceive is superior to humankind or the vicissitudes of the material world, thus implying the sacred approval of the divine. Understanding Islam in New Zealand necessarily involves an appreciation of complexity. The discourse over the past, present and future of New Zealand Muslims is often dominated by rather essentialised imagery and unhelpful binary dichotomies that mask or undermine complicated realities and fluid ambiguities that such a complex historical legacy produces. The increasingly diverse New Zealand Muslim minority represents a fluctuating confluence

of the various streams of Islamic custom and tradition: one that is progressively shaped and influenced by Western (or ‘Modern’) and New Zealand culture.

Future Research Options

Amongst its objectives, this thesis set out to identify weaknesses and gaps in existing historical research. As such, it outlines a useful conceptual framework through which the evolution of Muslim communities in New Zealand can be analysed; a comprehension of *‘asabiyyah* can be helpful for future historical examinations.

With regard to the settlement of Muslims in the South Island of New Zealand, I analysed only the history and those aspects that directly addressed the research objectives. That being the case, my study was focused on only a small portion of the experience of Muslims here. A thorough analysis of the wider themes or an in-depth examination of some points covered was beyond the purview of my present research. However, such investigation(s) would allow for an exploration of the relationship between such themes as migration experiences and purposes, education and vocational training, residency and citizenship, employment and income, religion and religious practice, language and culture, integration and assimilation. I would enjoy reading formal study of community newsletters for example. Did they really make an impact on the community at the time or were they only read (and then forgotten) by an informed elite within the community?

Conclusion

The South Island Muslim community of the 1970s was in many respects an imagined community. It was not based on real blood ties or daily interactions but upon a perceived sense of common religiosity in the face of an enveloping secular or Christian Pakeha society. This was informed and conditioned by regular communal meetings, prayers, and later publications (especially through newsletters) across national, racial and linguistic lines (Indian, Malay, Arab, African, European and so forth). It is precisely because the Muslim Association of Canterbury is a unique organisation in the South Island that only ever operated one single mosque, that it carries so much historical weight and meaning over the 1980s and 1990s. Neither the Association nor the mosque were created for propaganda purposes, or to reflect patronage; and it is not the case that this institution built such a tangibly Islamic construction at the first opportunity. It is striking that both still exist pretty much in the same way now as it did then. The distinctive culture and history of New Zealand’s Muslims within the global *ummah* stems mostly from the vicissitudes of economics and geography; Muslim immigrants came here to work or study, and found themselves isolated from the rest of the Muslim world. Obligated to some degree to pray

together across national, racial and linguistic lines over the 1960s and 1970s, the Muslims of the South Island successfully employed and engaged in *'asabiyyah* to foster communal unity. The Muslim community of Canterbury, through the regional Association, was then able to construct a proper mosque for prayer and to participate in the formation of the Islamic Federation (FIANZ) at a national level.

Having studied the past, and with an eye towards the future, I believe there is real cause for optimism. Globally and locally the *ummah* is slowly facing a positive upsurge and outpouring of interest in Islam in general and there is some sophisticated re-thinking of some of the older philosophical and hermeneutical paradigms currently in circulation. There will always be substantial differences between Muslims and non-Muslims but I think these can serve as a bridge rather than a barrier. If a review of the history of South Island Muslims has taught anything it is that whilst there will always be some inscrutable arguments and niggles, I think that in the long run the true values and positive virtues of Islam – particularly toleration and compassion – will eventually triumph. A religious minority developing within a society shaped on the outskirts of the Pacific Ocean and the perimeters of the (now former) British Empire defies simplistic categorization.

Appendices

Appendix A:

‘Supreme Court Lyttelton’, *Lyttelton Times*, 13 March 1858, p. 4.

‘SUPREME COURT, LYTTTELTON. Wednesday, March 10. larceny.

The case which occupied the Court to-day was an action brought against one Goorden, a native of India, by Wuzeera another Indian, for a robbery of some money from the house of the latter on the 27th September last. Both were servants of Mr. Wilson, of Cashmere. Both parties being ignorant of the English language, Mr. P. Ashton acted as interpreter, and the witnesses Wuzeera and his wife were sworn upon the Koran (English translation) and repeated the Mahometan formula and genuflexions of a solemn oath. The case as stated by Wuzeera and his wife Mindia was as follows:— In the morning before day-break the wife was awakened by Goordeeri tugging at her necklace, and called out; Wuzeera jumped up, seized the prisoner, and tied his hands and arms. In so doing he found upon the prisoner a purse which he recognised as his property, and which he found to be missing from the chest where he had put it. In the morning Wuzeera marched Goorden off to Lyttelton and brought him up before the Magistrate's Court. on a, charge of larceny. These were the only witnesses for the prosecution, and it was apparent on cross-examination that their statements did not tally as to all the circumstances of the case. For the defence, the statement of the prisoner was that he had gone to Wuzeera's house for a light and woke the wife to ask permission to=take some fire; and that the charge of theft was entirely false. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Irvine, Mr. Wilson's overseer, were called on the side of the prisoner, and their account of certain circumstances differed widely from that of the prosecutor. The impression of these witnesses evidently was that the charge was trumped up, and was owing to a grudge on account of some previous disagreements. The judge charged strongly in favour of the prisoner, and the jury returned a verdict of Not Guilty.’

Appendix B:

M. Ridswan 'The Canterbury Malaysian Students Association', Unpublished Master's thesis (University of Canterbury, 1972), pp. i-iii.

'In 1962, there were 590 overseas students from 37 countries studying in New Zealand. 100 of these were from Malaya and Singapore. They have become a familiar sight in universities, special training schools and the various high schools in New Zealand. This number has been increasing over the years so that by 1972, there are over 600 Malaysian students in Christchurch. 470 of them are at the University of Canterbury. The growth in the number of Malaysian students has produced a considerable number of problems, both for the New Zealand government and the New Zealand public but mostly for the Malaysian students themselves. As early as 1967, the New Zealand government and public was aware of this and efforts to restrict the number of Asian students in New Zealand universities were enforced. With the increasing number of Malaysian students in Christchurch, relationships between Malaysians and New Zealanders took a less favourable turn due to formation of cliques among Malaysians. In universities, high schools and other institutions where they are studying, the Malaysian students are frequently in exclusive gatherings - grouped together at lectures, cafeteria and library. The New Zealanders react to such communal groups with different feelings. This lack of contact between New Zealanders and the Malaysian students is perhaps one of the major reasons for the misunderstandings which occur between them. The causes of this segregation of Malaysian students are two-fold. Firstly, it is mainly due to an inherent shyness which prevents them from making the first move towards a conversation. Secondly, there is a general indifference in both parties towards each other. The background of a Malaysian student either Malay, Chinese or Indian, has been moulded by oriental traditions, customs and values. Each group of students had been subjected to life-ways different from those practised in New Zealand. Even though Western 'civilisation' had made its influence felt on a section of the Malaysian population, their general style of life and attitudes, their manners of expressions; eating and various other aspects of life are still basically traditional. The main difficulties faced by the Malaysian students in New Zealand include language, education, accommodation, racial discrimination and sex relationships. Above all, the problem of assimilation is caused by the cultural differences between the Malaysian students and the 'host' society. The study is, however, confined to the Malaysian students Association in Canterbury, whose membership in 1971 comprised approximately 41% of the total Malaysian population in Christchurch.'

Glossary of Islamic Terms

‘Abd – Slave.

‘Adl – Justice.

Aga/Agha – Honorific title for civilian or military officer. Derived from Persian *ağa* (master or lord). Shorthand term for gentleman.

Ahadith – Plural of Hadith.

‘Ahd – Promise or covenant.

Ahl al-Bayt – Literally People of the Household [of Ali]; byword for Shia Muslims.

Ahl al-Kitab – People of the Book. (Principally Jews and Christians).

Ahmadiyah / Qadiani – Followers of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835 – 1908), a self-proclaimed *Nabi* from India. Rejected as heretics or at least non-Muslim by mainstream Islam.

Akhirah – Afterlife.

Al-Ahkam al-Furu’iyah – Interpretations of *Shariah* particular or unique to a specific tribe, region or country.

Al-Amma – The common people. The proletariat.

Alim – Scholar. Learned. Usually used with reference to *Quran* teachers at mosques. See: Ilm, Muallim.

Al-Usuliyah – Literally “the principles”, employed to mean the basics of Islam, the fundamental points and practices.

Amah – Female slave.

Amin/Ameen – Truth, truly. Etymologically linked to *Amen* (Hebrew).

Amr/Amir/Ameer – Prince or leader. Often used in reference to leadership roles in community. Etymologically linked to *Emir* and *Emirate*.

Amthal - Figures of speech within Quranic Arabic. Example, parable, proverb.

Ansar/Ansari – Helper/s. Historically, native of the city of Medina who aided the Prophet Muhammed and his *Muhajrun* / emigrants from the city of Mecca.

‘Asabiyyah – Group solidarity.

Askar/Askari – Soldier.

Ayat – Verse. Proof. Lesson.

Ayatullah – Verse of God, proof of God. Religious title in Shia *Ulema*.

Azan – Call to prayer. Normally made from a minaret five times a day.

Bait/Bayt – House. Derived from the West Semitic word *bet*, present in place names like Bethlehem (Bayt Lahm in Arabic).

Baitullah/Baytullah – House of God. A popular epithet for a mosque.

Bazaar – Enclosed or sheltered marketplace (Persian). Etymologically linked to the word *bizarre* in English.

Bidah – Religious innovation or Heresy.

Bin/Ben/Ibn – Son, son of. Present in names like Benjamin (Benyamin in Arabic).

Bint – Daughter.

Beg/Bey – Mister, honorific title (Turkic). The feminine version Begum is still popular amongst Indian Muslims. Etymologically linked to names and surnames such as Skanderbeg or Izetbegovic.

Caliph/Caliphate – Successor (to the Prophet of God). Title given to the supreme sovereign authority over all Muslims (theoretically) following the death of Muhammed. The post became hereditary and contested for centuries, and was abolished in 1924.

Casbah – See Kasbah.

Chador – Full ankle-length coat or cloak worn by females outside the home (Persian).

Da`i – Missionary. See *Dawa*.

Dawa/Dawah – Mission-like activity designed to re-invigorate or re-activate the faithful or attract converts to the faith.

Dawla/al-Dawla – Secular or religious state, dynasty or polity.

Dervish/Darvish – Follower of *Sufi* order (Persian).

Dhimmi – Non-Muslim citizen within Muslim society or under Islamic legal protection.

Dua – Private prayer or supplication. Not compulsory but popular.

Dunya – World, or temporal existence.

Effendi - Mister, honorific title (Greek).

Eid – Principle religious festival.

Eid al-Adha – The Festival of the Sacrifice. The most important Muslim festivity occurs two months after the end of *Ramadan*. Customarily an animal will be sacrificed and meat distributed to the poor.

Eid al-Fitr – The Festival of Fast-Breaking. The second most important Muslim festivity. Follows immediately on the end of *Ramadan*. A special *Zakat* is raised and distributed to the poor.

Emir/Emirate – See *Amr*.

Fakir/Faqir - Muslim ascetic, mendicant or beggar, often associated with *Sufi* orders.

Fatwa – Legal opinion or ruling of a Mufti or qualified jurist.

Faqih – Legal and religious scholar.

Fez – Short cylindrical red-felt headdress with black tassel, worn by males.

Fitna/Fitnah – Temptation, test, strife, sedition.

Fitrah – Disposition or Nature. Shorthand for Islamic belief that all humans are born Muslim but raised in different faiths.

Fiqh – Jurisprudence. An expansion of the Shariah as articulated in the *Quran*. Usually supplemented by the Sunnah and implemented by the interpretations and decisions of Islamic scholars over centuries. It details the observance of rituals, morals and social legislation in Islam.

Ghazi/Gazi – Holy warrior. One who has led or participated in *Ghazw*, a military expedition.

Hadith – Traditional saying or deed attributed to the prophet Muhammad or his contemporaries.

Hafiz – Guardian or Memoriser of entire Quran. (Feminine: *Hafiza*).

Hajj – Pilgrimage. One of the five principle and strongly encouraged features or “pillars” of Islam. This involves rites over several days in Mecca.

Halal – Permitted. Often used in reference to foodstuffs that Muslims are allowed to eat according to religious dietary requirements that the animal meat should be slaughtered before God.

Hanafi – Dominant Muslim school of law in Sunni Islam, based on interpretations of the Persian Imam Abu Hanifah (699 — 767 CE). Currently has the most adherents worldwide.

Harafish – Urban rabble.

Haram – Forbidden. Usually used in reference to subjects, items or foodstuffs that Muslims are not allowed to use, engage in or eat.

Hareem – Women’s quarters. Derived from the word Haram, this was traditionally the section of a house, building or mosque reserved for females and forbidden to males.

Hanbali – Influential minority school of Islamic law named after the Iraqi scholar Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Hanbal Abu `Abd Allah al-Shaybani (780–855 CE). Hanbal emphasized the strict but selected use of certain Hadith uncritically to produce a rigid and doctrinaire interpretation that influenced Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab enormously.

Hegirah/Hijra – Migration. Usually used in reference to the Prophet Muhammed migrating from the city of Medina to the city of Mecca, which is the starting date of the Islamic calendar.

Hilal – Moon. Often employed as shorthand for moon-sighting.

Hinna – Henna.

Hodja – Islamic schoolteacher or village *Mullah* in Eastern Europe. Responsible for surnames such as: Hoca (Turkish), Hoxha (Albanian), Hodzic (Bosnian), Hotzakis (Greek), Hogeia (Romanian). Derived from Persian *Khwaja*.

Houri – Nymph in Islamic heaven / paradise (*Janah*).

Ijma – Consensus.

‘Ilm – Knowledge. Etymologically linked to *Alim*, *Mualim* and *Ulema*.

Imam – Muslim prayer leader or priest. Usually used in reference to the man, qualified or otherwise, to lead the congregational prayers.

Iman – Faith. In Islam this includes belief in God, His angels, His books, His prophets and the Day of Judgement.

Islam – Submission to God. Etymologically linked to *Salam*. The name of the faith of Muslims who believe themselves to have surrendered to God. There are five “pillars” of key articles:

1. *Shahadah* – Creed or Testament in one God and Muhammad as Prophet of that one God.
2. *Salah/Salat* – Prayer five times a day.
3. *Zakat* – Alms or charity, a voluntary poor tax.
4. *Sawm* – Fasting during the month of Ramadan.
5. *Hajj* – Pilgrimage.

Ismaili – A minority Shia sect.

Jahannam – Hell. Hellfire.

Jamat/Jamaat – Group, gathering or assembly (for prayer).

Janah/Janat al Firdosh – Literally Garden or Gardens of Paradise. Heaven.

Janazah – Funeral.

Jinn – Genie. Created from fire by God.

Juma – Friday congregational prayers at the mosque.

Kafir – Infidel, pagan or idolator.

Kasbah/Kasaba – Fortress. Originally the old fortress in the city centre. Often used to refer to Old City or distinctly Muslim section of a town.

Khatib/Khateeb – One who gives the Khutbah or sermon inside a mosque.

Khutbah - sermon. The exhortation given at the Friday congregational prayers at the mosque by the Imam.

Khwaja – Master or Lord (Persian). Honorific title was a *Sufi* teacher or leader.

Kitab – Book.

Koran – see *Quran*.

Lascar – Indian sailor. Derived from the Arabic *al-Askar* (soldier) through the Persian adaptation *laškar*.

Madrasah – School, secular or religious. Etymologically linked to the Hebrew *Midrash*.

Mahal – Place (Arabic). A specific section of town or city. Term employed in Urdu to designate palaces from fortresses (e.g. Taj Mahal).

Mahometan/Mohametan/Mahomedan/Mohamedan – Archaic English language reference to “Muslim”. Multiple variant spellings.

Maktab/Mekteb – Office (or Islamic primary school in many former Ottoman lands.)

Maliki – Reference to the school of Islamic law named after the blue eyed Arab Malik ibn Anas ibn Malik ibn Abi 'Amir al-Asbahi (711 – 795 CE). Prominent in North and West Africa.

Masjid or Mosque – Place of prayer. The essential requirement is a consecrated space (open, covered or both) where the Imam leads regular congregational prayers ranked in rows behind him, all facing the Kabah in Mecca.

Maulana or Molvi – Master or teacher. Another form of Muslim priest. Although capable of acting as Imam he is more often teaching the *Quran*.

Mawla/Mawli/Mawali – Guardian, trustee or helper. Historically applied to non-Arab converts to Islam and etymologically linked to the words *Wali* and *Maulana*.

Madhhab – Islamic school of law. There are four prominent schools of law within Sunni Islam.

Medina – City. Usually used to refer to Old City of town.

Milad/Mawlid/Mawlud – Birthday. Usually used in reference to *Milad-an-Nabi* or birthday of the Prophet Muhammad.

Millah – Nation. See: Millet.

Millet – A separate legal court system through which *Dhimmi* citizens could pursue “personal law” within their confessional community (Jewish, Christian and so forth). Turkish word derived from the Arabic *millah* for nation.

Mohametan/Mohamedan/Muhamedan – Muslim. Archaic. Variant spellings.

Moslem – Muslim. Archaic.

Mosque – See Masjid.

Mualim – One who is learned. Teacher.

Mansoor/Mansur – Victorious.

Muezzin – One who makes the Azan or call to prayer.

Mufti – One who issues *Fatwa*. Islamic legal scholar.

Muhajir/Muhajirun – One who migrates: migrant/s or exiles.

Mujadid – One who reforms matters or affairs; Reformer.

Mujahid/Mujahideen – One/s engaged in *Jihad*.

Muhkamat – Quranic verses (*ayat*) of plain meaning. Etymologically derived from the root ‘*uhkima*’ meaning to decide between two things. Refers to clearly decided verses of the Qur'an

Mullah – One who leads prayers; an *Imam*. Derived from *Mawla*, and similar to *Maulana* and *Molvi*, it is primarily understood as a term of respect for a religiously educated man.

Mus’haf – Copy (of the *Quran*); the physically bound volume.

Muslim – One in submission to God. An adherent of Islam who believes himself to have completely surrendered to God and His will.

Muslimah – Female *Muslim*.

Mu’min – One who believes (in God). A Believer.

Mussulman – Muslim. Popular nineteenth century English language adoption of the Turkish and Persian term, corrupted from the Arabic *Muslimun*.

Mutashabihat – Similitudes within Quranic Arabic. Etymologically derived from the root ‘*ishtabaha*’ and means ‘to be doubtful’.

Nabi – Prophet (of God). Distinct from a Messenger or *Rasool*. Etymologically linked to the Hebrew *Navi*.

Naib – Deputy.

Nasser – Victor.

Nawab – Honorific title popular in Indian subcontinent for a Muslim ruler or governor. Derived from the Arabic *Naib*.

Qanun – Canon. Secular law. Derived from Latin.

Qasam/Qasama – To swear or make an oath.

Qiblah – Direction. The direction of Mecca that Muslims face towards when conducting prayers.

Quran or **Koran** – Recitation. The Muslim holy book that forms the primary basis of doctrine in Islam. Muslims are encouraged to study it in its original classical Arabic and Ulema are always proficient in this respect.

Rabb – Lord. Used to refer to God. Etymologically linked to the Hebrew *Rabbi*.

Ramadan – The ninth month on the Islamic calendar and Muslim period of fasting during the hours of daylight.

Rasool/Rasul – Messenger (of God). Distinct from *Nabi*.

Raya/Rayah – Flag. Word used to designate tax paying common people within some Islamic states.

Sadaqa – Charity. Voluntary gift, no set amount.

Sahaba – Gentlemen. Historically used almost exclusively to refer to the companions of the Prophet Muhammed.

Sahib/Saheb – Mister or Master. Etymologically linked to the word *Sahaba*.

Salah/Salat – Prayer. Etymologically linked to the name *Saleh/Salih* (pious). There are five obligatory times:

1. *Salat al Fajr* – Morning prayers.
2. *Salat al Zohr* – Midday prayers.
3. *Salat al Asr* – Afternoon prayers.
4. *Salat al Maghrib* – Evening prayers.
5. *Salat al Isha* – Night prayers.

Salafi – Shorthand expression for those conservative Muslims who follow the *Salaf* (ancestors or predecessors) in Islam and consider the designation *Wahhabi* as pejorative.

Salam – Peace.

Salah/Salat – Prayer. The formal and ritual communal worship that Muslims try to observe five times daily.

Salwar/Shalwar – Wide baggy pyjama-like trousers worn by males and females.

Sepoy – Indian soldier. Derived from the Persian word *sepahi* and meaning ‘infantry soldier’ in the Mughal Empire and British India. Within the Turkish Ottoman Empire the word *sipahi* was employed to mean cavalry.

Shahid/Shahheed – Martyr.

Shariah – Legislation or Islamic law. The moral and religious code it details many aspects addressed by secular laws (crime and economics for example) as well as social relationships (marriage, diet, prayer and sex-crimes for example). Interpretations vary wildly between differing cultures but it is still considered in its strictest definition the infallible law of God in contradistinction to Fiqh or human interpretation of the laws.

Shafi – A prominent school of Islamic law based on the legal interpretations of Abu ‘Abdillah Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi‘i (767 — 820 CE) of the Quraysh tribe.

Currently prominent in South East Asia, nearly one third of all Sunni Muslims are understood to follow Shafi precepts.

Sheikh/Shaykh – Traditionally an elder or the ruler of a tribe. More popularly used as an honorific title for a man of great status within a community, religious or secular.

Shia – Party of Ali. The shorthand name given to supporters (and their philosophical and political descendants) of Ali and his communal faction. A dissenting minority in Islam but the dominant form of the faith in several important countries and regions. Shia sometimes refer to themselves or their group(s) as *Ahl al-Bayt* (People of the Household [of Ali]).

Shirk – Polytheism or idolatry.

Sira/Seerah – Biography. Usually shorthand for **Sīrat Rasul Allah** or **Al-sira al-Nabawiyya** (*Life of the Prophet of God, or Life of the Messenger of God*).

Souq/Souk/Suq – Open air market place.

Sufi – Muslim mystics. These represent variegated esoteric and unorthodox forms of Islamic spirituality that have arisen and developed over the past one thousand years in various Muslim societies.

Sultan/Sultanate – Power. A title employed by rulers who claimed full sovereignty in practical terms without deferring to a higher secular authority or claiming the Caliphate

Sunnah – Custom. The normative way of life based on the prescribed teachings and practices of Muhammad and mainstream interpretations of the *Quran*.

Sunni – Mainstream Islam. Refers to those who follow the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad.

Sura/Surah – Chapter of the *Quran*.

Tabligh - To reach out with a message. Usually used in reference to the Tablighi Jamaat, a grassroots international organisation created in the 1920s, in India, and composed of lay preachers who travel Muslim societies globally encouraging a myopic interpretation of the Sunnah.

Tawhid – Monotheism.

Taqwa – Piety.

Ulema – plural of *Alim*. Used in reference to Muslim clergy for want of a better expression.

Umma/Ummah – Nation. Commonwealth. International Muslim community regardless of national, ethnic, linguistic or class boundaries.

Urf – Customary, regional or tribal laws, distinct from Islamic ones.

Vizier – English adaptation of *Wazir/Wazeer*.

Wahhabi – Reference to eighteenth century theologian Muhammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhab and his austere neo-Hanbali interpretation of Islam.

Wali – Protector, governor or guardian.

Waqf – Religious Trust or Endowment; mortmain properties.

Wazir/Wazeer – Minister or government official; also counsellor or viceroy. Derived from the Arabic word *wezr* meaning “burden”.

Wudu – Ablutions. Ritual cleaning for the purposes of entering a mosque and for conducting prayers.

Zakat – Alms or poor tax. A voluntary but customary contribution or tithe (usually financial) set at 2.5% of one’s annual income.

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