بِســـــم اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحيم

In the name of God,

Most Gracious, Most Merciful

‘Mysterious Irrationality’: English Literature and Islam

by

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Introduction

The 'Azan', the call to prayer, invites worshippers in London to the mosque at Brick Lane and Regent's Park, at Finsbury Park and Willesden, at Walthamstow Central and Cricklewood, and the faithful troop in for the evening prayers, cowering from the fog, rain and mist. Once inside, they settle into a calming and benign ritual that soothes their anxious spirits, and as they read the holy book in the English translation do they hesitate to recall how their religion may have been portrayed through the pages of British and specifically, English literature, it may be asked. The books and newspapers, television, the internet, and blogosphere all routinely portray the glorious religion of Islam and Muslims as a kind of third column, 3.4 million in number yet a suspected minority in the maelstrom of black, ethnic and third world immigrant population of London.

How has the situation come to pass where a mainstream journalist, Melanie Phillips, herself a member of a religious minority, castigates the arrivals to the city as constituting a 'Londonistan', and Phillip Hollobone, a prominent Member of Parliament, calls the wearing of an Islamic dress, the burqa, pejoratively as "going round wearing a paper bag over your head", claiming that it was "offensive" for women to restrict others from making facial contact with them, refusing to meet them at his political office, and going so far as to introduce a Private Members Bill named the 'Face Covering (Regulations) Bill'.

Islam and Muslims remain a religion and a group of religious believers not bearing an unique ethnicity like Jewish people who, numbering 13.4 million people worldwide, are an ethnoreligious group originating in the Israelis or Hebrews of the ancient Near East. Judaism is a monotheistic, Abrahamic and fatalistic faith originating in the 'Tanakah' or Hebrew bible. But for Islam it is a fact that Somalis, Saudis, Ethiopians, people from Western China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Holland and even Wales make up the conglomerate of people calling themselves 'Muslims', a word meaning submission: submission to the will of God.

Yet, was it ever thus, and does British literature furnish a different record of integration, amelioration and harmony? Does the record of the canonical literature present Islam in its true light as a glorious world religion, or does it denigrate and despise the teachings and tenets of the religion? Unfortunately, what we will observe is a litany of abuse and misinformation about the religion of Islam and the relations between the Christian West and the Islamic sphere. Christian writers such as Roger Bacon, Charles Doughty, Edward Pococke, Henry Maundrell and William Muir were hostile, superior and arrogant towards Islam, and it is not until we move into the modern era that we see a more positive and welcoming approach to Muslims and to their ideology.

As an author, I accept responsibility for charting a long and difficult relationship between the English literature on record since Bacon and Chaucer and the adherents of the faith throughout the same period. In the final analysis, if the book becomes a lexicon of anti-Muslim phobias, its general theme and content (not its authorial opinions that are hopefully balanced and objective) opposing any rapprochement with Islam, then I shall have failed in the endeavour, despite my good efforts to include ephemera, verses, ballads, poetry and any realia that might help the pro-Islam cause. I hope it will show profound scholarship and the most meticulous care to present in good light research on the topic, otherwise it can only remain as a simple pamphlet of genuine and kindly pro Islamic work, for I can only be pro

Muslim and not secularly uninvolved with the subject. Despite my care not to, I sincerely trust that it does not add to the weight of pro Christian message and proselytisation, rather than assist in a dialogue between Muslims and Christians. The present author does not wish to identify himself by default with any of the criticisms here recorded, and only sets them down as a matter of scholarly record in the hope that it will assist British Muslims to find their place in the complex discourse between East and West.

I find that I have needed to coin a number of words in this study such as 'Muslimdom' and 'Islamistas' rather than the dreadful secular terms 'Islamic world' and 'Islamists'. I have not followed the convention of inserting the phrase Salalahu wa Salaam or SAW after each mention of the prophet's name, since my reverence for the prophet is evident in every word that I write.

Chapter 1: Background and History

If Muslims were always to be described as gullible, disorganised and inferior, what was it about attitudes towards their religion that caused Christian writers to hold such views? The answer may be that they were approaching the subject from a Christian perspective. They positively viewed their own religion as received, permanent and unbounded and, therefore, were not predisposed to see any other religion as having merit, worth or spiritual attraction, but were fanatically against. It was a matter of faith; faith that knew no transgression. The liberal West was light, the fundamentalist East darkness: centuries of tradition enforced this rule and it remains the foundation upon which discussion about Islam was shaped.

Writers perceived Islam as a source of danger, leading to what Roger Bacon termed pluralistically as 'mysterious irrationalities' in their relationships with Muslims and people of other faiths also including Hindus, Jainists, Zoroastrians, Buddhists and Jews. They were xenophobic in the sense that their country was best, their culture immutable and their religion sacrosanct. This hostility fostered myths in a manner so mysteriously rabid that any connection with the original was lost. Obviously, the outbreak of battles was the final link in this nationalistic, Christian preordination.

The Crusades, the battles against the Saracens, i. e. Muslims, were undertaken between 1095 and 1291 to recapture lands lost to Christendom, and specifically the Roman church. It was a movement to retake Jerusalem, defended by the great Saladin, or Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, for the West, and led to great bloodshed and a weakening of the Christian Byzantine Empire, which capitulated two centuries later to the Muslim Turks. In the late eleventh century, the resentment felt by Christians against the loss of the privileges in the 'holy lands' was so palpable that it led to a crusading zeal that swept across Europe, and involved King Richard I of England, better known as Richard the Lionheart, who sold off many of the country's assets in his desire to raise money to embark on the Third Crusade in 1189.

Jerusalem had fallen to the First Crusaders in 1099. Many of its Christian, Muslim and Jewish populations were slaughtered. The Crusaders did not spare the lives of children, women or the elderly even after first assuring them of their safety. Saladin defeated King Guy's army in 1187 at the Horns of Hettin, and soon after recaptured Jerusalem. Unlike the Crusading armies, Saladin, who was a Muslim who followed the teachings of Islam, did not slay the city's Christian inhabitants, nor lay waste to the land. Saladin's virtuous acts gained him the respect of his enemies and of history.

King Richard I, who led the Third Crusade to recover Jerusalem, met Saladin in a conflict that was to be recorded in later chivalric romances. The Crusaders failed in their attempt, yet Saladin respected Richard I as an honourable opponent. Saladin's legendary generosity and sense of honour in conducting the treaty that ended the Crusade earned him the lasting respect not only of his contemporary rivals but also of the modern historian. As the historian,

Norman Daniel has confirmed: ''It would probably be true to say that this legend was known over a wider area for a longer period of time than that of any political figure of the mediaeval West, and almost as favourably.''[1]

Rather than becoming a hated figure in Europe, Saladin became a celebrated hero in literature, which can be observed in later literary accounts in the masculine romance form by Rider Haggard and others.

We will turn to look at the record of the early relationships between English literature and its attitudes to Muslims to investigate the phenomenon of disapproval – and unfortunately the pattern of fear and distrust begins. A thirteenth century English writer and philosopher, Roger Bacon, one of the earliest advocates of the modern scientific method, was inspired by the works of Aristotle and later Arabic works, such as the works of Muslim scientist Alhazen. Born in Ilchester in Somerset, England, possibly in 1213, Bacon was interested in the use of reason to promote Christianity. He held that only through intellectual argument could the faithful approach 'infideles' and thereby attempt to convert them. And even in the case of conversion, they would still have to become true believers and truly devout in order to qualify as Christians. The prophet Muhammad was considered by Bacon as the 'Antichristus', one who opposed Christ, and therefore, "it would be extremely useful to the Church of God to give thought to the time of [the law of Antichrist]: whether it will follow swiftly after the destruction of the law of Muhammad or much later…"[2]

The concept of the tribes of Gog and Magog that he introduced,[3] an undefined concept emanating from the Old Testament of the Bible in Genesis 10. 2, and also seen in the holy Qur'an, was imperative to him, for his followers should be made aware of their "condition and location":

Since these peoples, confined in specific parts of the world, will emerge into a desolate region and meet Antichrist, Christians — especially the Roman Church — must consider well the position of these places. This will make it possible to comprehend the savagery of these tribes, and through that, the time of Antichrist's arrival and place where he will appear.

Fear of the Antichrist, a Christian idea based on the New Testament, was well marked in his literature, for he advised Christians to resist and develop methods of defence against 'the Antichrist'. He alarmed his followers by suggesting that he would use arts and powers known to scholars, despite the fact that Aristotle had used experimental science "when he delivered the world to Alexander… And Antichrist will use this wonderful science, far more powerfully than Aristotle." Christians had always believed that powers that had been given to the Antichrist by the devil would help him, as the Venerable Bede[4] had suggested, to "perform magic greater than that of anyone else." The irrational fear and superstition of these times was marked by Bacon in passages where the supposed evil, magic[5] and dark arts of the antichrist were a great challenge to the faithful, and particularly he suspected that, "Mongols and Muslims were already working against Christendom with such weapons: exercising fascination; stirring up mysterious irrationalities and dangerous impulses in the hearts of good Christians, sowing discord among the princes and causing wars among them."

It is significant that the allegations of demonic power against Muhammad have been an early and continuous feature of anti-Muslim rhetoric, seen throughout the Middle Ages. These have generally continued until today, but not without a vigorous defence from Muslims everywhere. Since the Rushdie affair, Muslims have become far more proactive in defence

of their religion. Some would wish to label this vigorous challenge as "terrorism", yet such a facile appellation is not helpful in a democratic context where integration and multiculturism are desired norms, and where all the citizens of Britain can hold equal rights, representation and justice.

Supposedly born and bred in England, in the town of St Albans, but now disputed, Sir John Mandeville may have been the author of his 'Travels' which allegedly first appeared in translation from Anglo-Norman French, and circulated between 1357 and 1371. They were subsequently first printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1499, when they were popularly enjoyed throughout Christendom. He translated the work of William of Tripoli who wrote an unsympathetic biography of Prophet Muhammad, rejecting much favourable information. Mandeville took a sympathetic view of Arabia, but not without the usual cavils about its desert nature:

Also the city of Mecca where Mohammet lieth is of the great deserts of Arabia; and there lieth [the] body of him full honourably in their temple, that the Saracens clepen [call ed.] Musketh. And it is from Babylon the less, where the soldan dwelleth, unto Mecca above-said, into a thirty-two journeys.

And wit well, that the realm of Arabia is a full great country, but therein is over-much desert. And no man may dwell there in that desert for default of water, for that land is all gravelly and full of sand. And it is dry and no thing fruitful, because that it hath no moisture; and therefore is there so much desert. And if it had rivers and wells, and the land also were as it is in other parts, it should be as full of people and as full inhabited with folk as in other places; for there is full great multitude of people, whereas the land is inhabited. Arabia dureth from the ends of the realm of Chaldea unto the last end of Africa, and marcheth to the land of Idumea toward the end of Botron. And in Chaldea the chief city is Bagdad.[6]

The 'Father of English Literature', the medieval poet and chronicler of the 'Canterbury Tales', Geoffrey Chaucer, born in 1343, wrote in middle English in a plain fashion about the events of the fourteenth century. He was a courtier, diplomat and civil servant who, as a renowned chronicler, became the first poet to be buried in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. Recording the character of his Parson in 'The Parson's Tale', he seems to belong to a Golden Age before the troublesome Islam came along. He portrays his Christian Parson as idealised and sentimentalised in contrast to his Wife of Bath who is bawdy, reckless and carnal. Such a juxtaposition may have been deliberate, for Chaucer sees more deeply into her character than he does the poor Parson, whose looking to worldly, materialistic qualities indicates that Chaucer has not enquired deeply into, nor is wholehearted about, the Christianity and the Church of his day. He draws back from the discovery of his own attitude to Christians and Christendom, even apologetically. This cripples his poetry.

Chaucer had an awareness of Muslims and Muslimdom, for recording the knowledge of his 'Doctour of Physic' he demonstrates that Arab philosophy and medicine had characters that he could recognise as worthy of inclusion in the world of his pilgrims:

"Wel knew he the olde Aesculapius	He knew well old Aesculapius
And Deyscorides and eek Rufus	And Deyscorides and also Rufus
Olde Ypocras, Haly and Galeyn,	Old Hippocrates, Jesu Haly (Ibn Isa) and Galeyn
Serapion, Razi and Avycen,	Serapion, Al Razi (Rhazes) and Avicenna (Ibn Sina)
Averrois, Damascien,	Averrois (Ibn Rushd), Damascien
and Constantyn	and Constantin
Bernard and Gatesden and Gilbertyn."[7]	Bernard and Gatesden and Gilbertin.

Chaucer cited these Arab scholars as the medical authorities for the Science of the time, in the 'Prologue to the Canterbury Tales'. Ibn Isa, Al Razi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Ibn Rushd were the four Arab physicians whose textbooks had been in use between the eighth and the twelfth century A.D. They were considered as the main sources of medical learning known to Europe from the early middle ages. These Arab physicians had been the basis of knowledge on medicine for four hundred years, and would continue to be so until the loss of Granada by the Muslims in 1492 to the kings of Castile.

These scholars included Adelard of Bath, who was a Western scholar who translated Al-Khwarizmi's texts on astronomy and Euclid's 'Elements' from Arabic into Latin. He was one of the first to introduce Indian numerals to Europe that now constitute our numbering system, 1,2,3 etc. He stands at the crossroads of three intellectual traditions: the classical learning of the French schools, the ancient Greek culture of Southern Italy, and the brilliant, original Arabic sciences. A popular theme was the Oriental tale written for Westerners. These included works by Petrus Alfonsi, an ex-Jewish writer converted to Christianity, who lived in Muslim Spain and author of the important text 'Disciplina Clericalis', which was the first collection of such works.[8]

Robert of Ketton, 1107 – 1160, was the first translator of the Qur'an into Latin in manuscript, known as the 'Lex Mahumet pseudoprophete'; (another anti-Muslim slur) and also translated several scientific texts such as 'Alchemy' by Morienus Romanus. He entered the priesthood in a village in Rutland, a short distance from Stamford, Lincolnshire. Robert of Ketton is believed to have been taught at the Cathedral School of Paris. He travelled to the East from France for four years during 1134-1137 with his fellow student and friend, Herman Dalmatin, learning Arabic and writing about Islam.[9]

According to John Foxe, Chaucer's work on religion was permitted by the bishops, referring to the Act of 1542, that authorised:

the works of Chaucer to remain still and to be occupied; who, no doubt, saw into religion as much almost as even we do now, and uttereth in his works no less, and seemeth to be a right Wicklevian, or else there never was any. And that, all his works almost, if they be thoroughly advised, will testify (albeit done in mirth, and covertly); and especially the latter end of his third book of the Testament of Love ... Wherein, except a man be altogether blind, he may espy him at the full: although in the same book …shadows covertly, as under a visor, he

suborneth truth in such sort, as both privily she may profit the godly-minded, and yet not be espied of the crafty adversary.[10]

Foxe considered some of Chaucer's works as being against his Puritanical view of religion, and doubted whether they represented the truth of Christian religion.

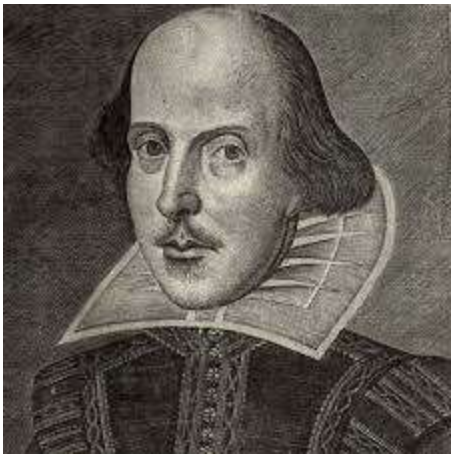
There was an interest in the Muslim East in the Elizabethan period. Richard Hakluyt copied the correspondence between the Ottoman queen mother, Queen Safiye and Elizabeth I in his 'Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation'.[11] Hakluyt was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. He was the chaplain and secretary of Sir Edward Stafford, the English ambassador to the France between 1583 and 1588.

The potential for conflict with 'Others' such as Islamic people arises as early as the poet Edmund Spenser, who had sectarian, philosophical, linguistic and political difficulties with his contemporary life. Spenser includes the controversy of Elizabethan church reform within the epic, 'The Fairie Queene'. His character, Gloriana, has religious English knights decimate Roman Catholic continental power in books 1 and 5. Spenser's time saw conflict between the Protestant and Roman Catholic faiths, and it led to much sectarian division, just as exists today between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, the precursor of so called 'Islamist' terrorism in the UK. Spenser believed that all religions were unclear in some way, and although we all search for a clear message, it is not possible to find it.[12]

There was a possibility of integration with Irish subjects, but the secular issues of social intercourse, marriage, politics and especially language were in great need of reform, and this extract suggests that his unhappiness with the state of affairs in Ireland prefigures the current situation, where a great social divide between the two communities exists, and persists even today in its insolubility:

Now this kynde of intercourse with the Irish breaded such acquayntaunce amitie and frendshipp between them and us, beinge so furnisht with theire Languadge that wee cared not contrary to our duties in balancing our creditte, to make fostered, gossiping, and marriadge as aforesaid with them so that now the English Pale and many other places of the kingdome that were planted with English at the first Conquests are growne to a confusion.[13]

Shakespeare 21 April, 1564



The world-renowned Elizabethan genius, poet and playwright, William Shakespeare, the Bard of Avon, used the character, Othello in themes, amongst others, of racism in the Moor of Venice. This is not to declare that Shakespeare is a racist writer, but rather that he uses racial themes that he learnt elsewhere from different sources in his texts.

In the drama, Othello is a Moor of Moroccan origin. The term 'Moor' was used pejoratively in Europe in a broader sense to refer to anyone of Arab or African blood, whether living in Spain or North Africa. Moors are a people of medieval Muslim descent, whether the term is applied to the Berbers, North African Arabs, or Muslims from that region. Othello meets and marries the beautiful Desdemona in Venice, where he is a soldier of the Republic, and takes up his post in Cyprus. His contemporary, Iago, conspires in a plot to convince Othello that Desdemona has cheated him, singling out a black character for a racist attack, impugning his honour and integrity as well as that of Desdemona. "Even now, very now an old black ram is tupping your white ewe"[14] and, "I am one, sir that comes to tell you, your daughter and the Moor are now making the beast with two backs", claims Iago to Brabantio, Desdemona's father, [15] in a malicious plot to convince Brabantio of his daughter's adultery.

Othello is referred to as "a lascivious Moor", and there are a number of references to him as 'black', a term in Elizabethan times with negative connotations. Contrarily, Desdemona is referred to as 'white' as Shakespeare portrays an undiluted image of: "That whiter skin of hers than snow / As smooth as monumental alabaster" that turns to ice when she lies slain, so that Othello declaims tragically: "Cold, cold, my girl? / Even like thy chastity. O! cursed, cursed slave!"[16]

In the text, Othello becomes 'Other', an ethnic racial stereotype described by one character, Rodrigo, as "thick-lips". The act of miscegenation in marrying a beautiful white woman is clear to an Elizabethan audience not used to the celebration of ebony and ivory.[17] Why

should a fellow soldier engage in such racism, it may be asked. Jealousy of Othello's elevating another officer to high rank is the cause, and Iago plots to avenge him for it: "I follow him to serve my turn upon him", he cries. Iago's jealousy causes him to turn it upon others and to create a feeling for revenge in Othello's breast so that he murders Desdemona, stabs Iago, and finally kills himself: And in justification Othello declares wisely:

Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,

Nor set down aught in malice: then must you speak

Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;

Of one not easily jealous, but, being wrought,

Perplex'd in the extreme; of one whose hand,

Like the base Judean, threw a pearl away

Richer than all his tribe.

Othello puts it on record to explain his actions undiplomatically:

Set you down this;

And say besides, — that in Aleppo once,

Where a malignant and a turban'd Turk

Beat a Venetian and traduc'd the state.

The reaction to the tale of racism, passion and jealousy remains something to be regretted as a tragedy with implications for Othello's money and property; a Muslim is to be 'traduced' in turn by his Christian captains and servers:

O Spartan dog,

More fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea!

Look on the tragic loading of this bed;

This is thy work: — the object poisons sight;

Let it be hid. — Gratiano, keep the house,

And seize upon the fortunes of the Moor,[18]

The portrayal of Othello appeals to all the base connotations that the Elizabethans felt about Muslims. It did not assist matters either that the character was played upon the stage at the Globe theatre by a white, male actor with a face blackened with charcoal, leading to issues not only of gender, but of inequalities in the acting profession; nor did it help to cement relationships with those who frequented the 'pit' of the open – air theatre in London and those members of the Muslim population who were not theatregoers.

Another Shakespearean character who ascribed negative connotations to the Eastern world is Mark Antony in 'Antony and Cleopatra', delighting in the fact that: "The beds i' the east are soft, and who has an "emasculating" mistress in Cleopatra. Racist remarks in the voice of Romans are ascribed to Cleopatra by Captain Philo in "tawny front":

Nay, but this dotage of our general's
O'erflows the measure: those his goodly eyes,
That o'er the files and musters of the war
Have glow'd like plated Mars, now bend, now turn,
The office and devotion of their view
Upon a tawny front[19]

and again in "gypsy's lust":

…His captain's heart,
Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
The buckles on his breast, reneges all temper

And is become the bellows and the fan
To cool a gypsy's lust.[20]

The sexuality of her nature is foregrounded, to make her appear a figure of disrespect like a 'gypsy' or a whore who has totally captivated the Roman general, Mark Anthony, so that he becomes: "The triple pillar of the world transform'd / Into a strumpet's fool" [21]

Alive, she is a schemer and a clever trickster: "She is cunning past man's thought" and: "a wonderful piece of work."[22] Mark Anthony's speech infers a binary opposition between the supposed idleness of the East and the virility and greatness of the West:

But that your royalty
Holds idleness your subject, I should take you
For idleness itself.[23]

And again, Cleopatra has no use for a castrated man - only a virile one, indicating her allegedly lustful nature: "I take no pleasure / In aught an eunuch has."[24]

The contrary nature of Mark Anthony's marriage to Octavia points up Cleopatra's faults again:

…take Antony
Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims
No worse a husband than the best of men;

Whose virtue and whose general graces speak
That which none else can utter.

Cleopatra has broken Anthony's sword, which has been "made weak by his affection"[25] suggesting that she has debilitated him sexually. His submission to Cleopatra offers up the desirability of the East versus the staid and duty bound soldier of Rome. The racism exhibited against the Egyptian queen by Caesar and his Roman generals is part, symbolically, of the Elizabethan audience's antipathy to things Eastern, Muslim and 'Other'.

Shakespeare's exact contemporary, Christopher Marlowe, (1564 - 30 May 1593), has fatalistic tendencies that parallel Islam in the way that many Muslims believe in predestiny and accept the destiny of Allah through subservience to the will of God.

In his deeply fatalistic work 'Dr Faustus', the protagonist Dr Faustus reaffirms the pact he has made with the devil in his quest for knowledge and power, and is, consequently, doomed forever. Like many Muslims, his search for redemption drives him to anticipate paradise, where all sins are redeemed, rather than hell where, traditionally, all sins are punished for eternity.

His acts are predestined, for we know that his heart and soul are crying out for repentance. Yet, some force has compelled him to remain silent.

When we consider that Faustus shows an urge to repent and that, overwhelmed by his wickedness, he continually questions himself about the desirability of turning to God and asking for his forgiveness, the conflict between these two ideas arises once more. Faustus's soul is crying out for redemption. And yet, for no apparent reason, some unseen force forbids this course of action and Faustus is therefore doomed to damnation in hell. This idea pervades the rest of the play. Faustus, as the end of the tragedy approaches, really wants to cry out for forgiveness for his sinful pact with the devil. He cries out that he knows that he is damned. After the words of the 'Old Man' he will repent his descent to hell during his quest for power and knowledge. His greed has led him to this fate. Yet he ponders for a moment and then declaims:

I do repent and yet I do despair
Hell strives with grace for conquest in my breast
What shall I do to shun the snares of death?[26]

This means that he will ask God for redemption. It is difficult to decide whether, as John H Ingram declared, it remains merely a tragedy where "a mighty mind is gradually subjugated by the power of evil passions".[27] Or is it to say that Faustus is an example of the great tragedy of a man who is predestined to a terrible doom and who cannot escape, however much his soul cried out for release from its prefixed bonds. I take the latter view that Faustus was fated, like many Muslims believe they are, to make the choice that he was unable to avoid through an almighty and overpowering predestiny.[28]

A little later, an Arabic scholar, Edward Pococke, 1603 -1691, held the chair of Arabic at Oxford University. In 1650 he had published a short chapter on the history of the Arabs before Islam; however, in this work allegations against the morals of Muhammad were made, not helpful to Muslim – Christian discourse. As a collector of manuscripts on behalf of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he was in a unique position to influence his followers with regard to Islam. Pococke's attitude to Arabic philosophy was dismissive and inaccurate,[29] despite the fact that the holy Qur'an, its main philosophical text, had stood the test of time for a thousand years. His translation of Ibn Tufayl's 'The Living Son of the Awake' had an influence on Daniel Defoe as the model for 'Robinson Crusoe', and which was also influenced by Shakespeare's 'The Tempest.' Shakespeare's comedy, according to Octave Mannoni, is a springboard for the story of Prospero, Caliban and Ariel, whom Mannoni thinks are positively the original characters for the embryo of the escape novel, 'Robinson Crusoe' which recounts, "the long and difficult cure of a misanthropic neurosis".[30]

These traditional Islamic worldview stories, such as 'Robinson Crusoe', had their apogee in 'The Tempest' and are adventure myths set in island places bounded only by the imagination, morality and unwritten law. They stand as symbols for the area of the imagination which a reader makes for himself - the isolation, the clear boundaries, are part of the human limitation which the genre required. Tools are their subject in hand, and this is their satisfaction. Their air is contrived, artificial, constrained: theirs the remoteness, imprisonment, convictdom of the unfree. The only freedom that Crusoe maintains is the freedom of a personal existential struggle to end his own mysterious, irrational, island captivity.

But Edward Pococke, who had studied Arabic, did want to avoid 'mysterious irrationalities', basic beliefs and old tales that misrepresented Islam and Muhammad. He helped to introduce the use of primary sources as well as doing field-work in Islamic contexts, and his approach to Islam was through ancient texts, by way of historical rather than modern viewpoints. Writing in Latin meant, however, that he reached very few of the common people in England at the time.

There continued to be mysterious and strange interpretations of Islam throughout the period, but they continued side by side with some positive ones. Edward Gibbon gave a personal description of Prophet Mohammad in his book 'The Decline and fall of the Roman Empire'. Gibbon took Prophet Muhammad to be a humble, modest and unassuming human being whose rustic charm is appreciated :

'The good sense of Muhammad despised the pomp of royalty. The Apostle of God submitted to the menial offices of the family; he kindled the fire; swept the floor; milked the ewes; and mended with his own hands his shoes and garments. Disdaining the penance and merit of a hermit, he observed without effort of vanity the abstemious diet of an Arab.'[31]

However the image he portrayed was not totally positive as the author of the book considered Muhammad as an imposter.[32]

There were also travel books that referred to Islam and Muslims. Recording an eighteenth century journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, [33] Henry Maundrell wrote an account of his

encounters with the Middle East. The travel book had its origins in the diary he carried with him on an Easter pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1697. He was born at Compton Bassett near Calne in Wiltshire in 1665. He attended Exeter College, Oxford from 1682 and then obtained his MA in 1688. Maundrell made no attempt to understand Islam or to read Arabic. His work was descriptive and he recorded local scenes with great detail. He was quite disinterested, and brought no local colour or human interest into his accounts. Maundrell's criticisms were insignificant and only carried his own mysterious prejudices and judgments about the region without bringing any humanity or warmth towards people of the Orient.[34]

In 1708, a scholar named Simon Ockley, along with edited editions by Edward Gibbon, the author, as we saw, of 'Decline and Fall', produced a 'History of Saracens',[35] the pre-Crusade inhabitants of Europe, referred to as the "Greeks and Latins", in which he made astonishing comparisons with the Arab nation. Ockley referred to the Arabs in "the age of Moses or Mahomet" [sic] thus: "the human brute, without arts or laws, almost without sense of language, is poorly distinguished from the rest of the animal creation"[36] A further slur upon the Arab nation was contained in the history, where it went at lengths to explain the perfidy and (dis)honourable conduct of its people:

The nice sensibility of honour, which weighs the insult rather than the injury, shed its daily venom on the quarrels of the Arabs: the honour of their women, and of their beards, is most easily wounded; an indecent action, a contemptuous word, can be expiated only by the blood of the offender.[37]

While it is true to say that, even in modern-day Arabia, there is normally a 'blood price' of money to be paid for the crime of murder, this is most often redeemed by forgiveness from the victim's family and does not usually result in the drawing of blood. Such comments only serve to endorse the general stereotype that Western travel writers would like, and still to this day, *do* place on Arabs' appearance, dress, manners, customs and religion.

Yet, contrarily, Ockley commented with favour in 'History of the Saracen Empire,' on the profound influence of prophet Muhammad, and found much to be admired in the spirituality of Islam: "The greatest success of Muhammad's life was effected by sheer moral force", he wrote. He went on to comment admiringly on the spiritual profundity of Islam that:

It is not the propagation but the permanency of his religion that deserves our wonder, the same pure and perfect impression which he engraved at Mecca and Medina is preserved after the revolutions of twelve centuries by the Indian, the African and the Turkish proselytes of the Koran....The Mahometans have uniformly withstood the temptation of reducing the object of their faith and devotion to a level with the senses and imagination of man. 'I believe in One God and Mahomet the Apostle of God' is the simple and invariable profession of Islam. The intellectual image of the Deity has never been degraded by any visible idol; the honors of the prophet have never transgressed the measure of human virtue, and his living precepts have restrained the gratitude of his disciples within the bounds of reason and religion.[38]

We begin to see here glimmers of an understanding of Islam and Muslims.[39]

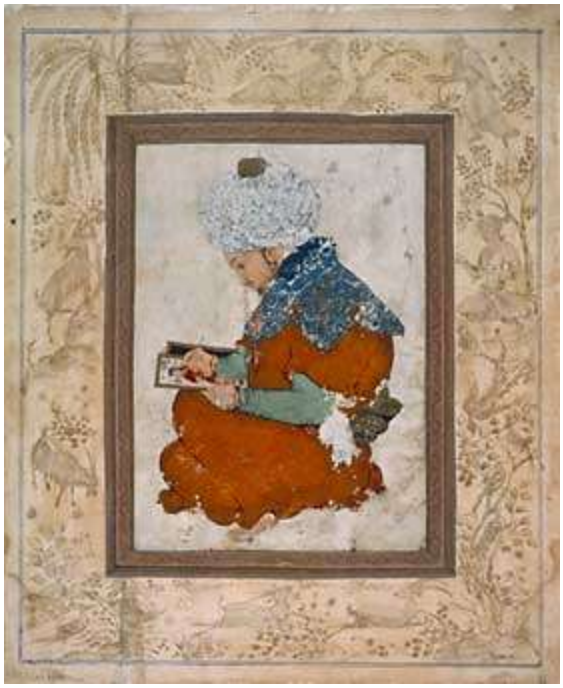
Thomas Moore's novel 'Lalla Rookh' is an Oriental romance, published in 1817.[40] The title is taken from the name of the heroine of the frame tale, the daughter of the 17th-

century Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Engaged to the young king ofBukhara, Lalla Rookh goes forward to meet him, but falls in love with Feramorz, a poet from her entourage. The bulk of the work consists of four interpolated tales sung by the poet: ''The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan'' loosely based on the story of Al-Muqanna,''Paradise and the Peri'', ''The Fire-Worshippers'', and ''The Light of the Harem''. When Lalla Rookh enters the palace of her bridegroom she feints, but is restored at the sound of a well known voice. She awakes with rapture to find that the poet she loves is none other than the king to whom she is engaged.

Rich and wealthy people had begun to add Egypt and the Holy Land to their "Grand Tour", a requisite for the upper classes in the early nineteenth century. William Makepeace Thackeray's travel book, 'Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo',[41] published under the pseudonym "Tit-marsh", provided a stimulus for English people to go to visit the lands that he described and report on their findings.

The journey begins by sea at Gibraltar, meaning Jab al Tariq, named after the Moorish general, Tariq ibn Ziyad, who captured the promontory on the coast of Spain after a short siege. The Muslim presence in Gibraltar commenced on 27 April 711 when the Berber general led the attack on the Rock. Thackeray refers to the "Moorish castle" as "the only building about the Rock which has an air at all picturesque or romantic…" He then continues to refer to chivalrous romances in which Sir Huon of Bordeaux is made to prove his knighthood by travelling to Babylon and there extracting the Sultan's front teeth and beard. He hopes whimsically that he "is reconciled to the loss of his front teeth and whiskers – let us try to think that he is better off without them…"[4

Journeying on by steamship to Athens, which "was a disappointment", he soon came upon Constantinople where the holy month of Ramadan was being observed: "… no eating, the fish and meat fizzing in the work-shops are only for the Christians" and observes "meandering minstrels were there selling figs (in the name of the prophet, doubtless)". He encounters Islamic ornamentation where:



There was a man sitting in an open room, ornamented with fine long-tailed sentences of the Koran: some in red, some in blue; some written diagonally over the paper; some so shaped as to represent ships, dragons, or mysterious animals. The man squatted on a carpet in the middle of the room, with folded arms, wriggling his head to and fro, swaying about, and singing through his nose choice phrases from the sacred work.

In the room above he discovers a schoolroom where a child was being chastised and Thackeray comments "I pity that poor blubbering Mahometan: he will never be able to relish the "Arabian Nights" in the original, all his life long," he continued "they still occasionally beat a man for going into a mosque, but this is almost the only sign of ferocious vitality left in the Turk of the Mediterranean coast."[43]

A negative does not prove a positive, but arriving in the city he declared what he had *not* seen during the holy month of Ramadan rather than what he had witnessed:

I didn't see the dancing dervishes, it was Ramazan; nor the howling dervishes at Scutari, it was Ramazan; nor the interior of St Sophia, nor the women's apartments of Seraglio, nor the fashionable promenade of the Sweet Waters, always because it was Ramazan; during which period the dervishes dance and howl but rarely, their legs and lungs unequal to much exertion during the fast of fifteen hours. Royal palaces and mosques are shut; and though the Valley of the Sweet Waters is there, no one goes to walk; the people remaining asleep all day, and passing the night in feasting and carousing.[44]

While in the island of Rhodes, he refers to the Sultan as "the picture of debauch and ennui" and continues, in some scathing terms, an irrational allusion: "the awful camel driver, the supernatural husband of Khadija" to the holy prophet:

This sad spectacle of the decay of two of the great institutions of the world. Knighthood is gone – amen; it expired with dignity; face to the foe: and old Mahometanism is lingering just about to drop. … Think of the poor dear houris in Paradise, how sad they must look as the arrivals of the faithful become less and less frequent every day… the fountains of eternal wine are beginning to run rather dry, and of a questionable liquor; the ready-roasted-meat trees may cry "Come eat me", every now and then in a faint voice, without any gravy in it – but the faithful begin to doubt about the quality of the victuals. Of nights you may see the houris sitting sadly under them, darning their faded muslins: Ali, Omar and the Imaums are reconciled and have gloomy conversations; and the Chief of the Faithful himself, the awful camel driver, the supernatural husband of Khadija sits alone in a tumbledown kiosk, thinking moodily of the destiny that is impending over him; and of the day when the gardens of bliss shall be as vacant as the bankrupt Olympus…[45]

Finally arrived at Cairo, Thackeray makes the profoundly obtuse observation about the Pyramids that:

… the truth is, nobody was seriously moved. And why should they, because of an exaggeration of bricks ever so enormous? I confess, for my part, that the Pyramids are very big.

The constant theme is of Islam as 'Other', different, inaccessible, interesting, yet beneath the gaze of the "snob" Englishman he outlined in his "Book of Snobs."[46] A snob, of course, was an adaptation of the term to refer to people who felt that they were superior to others, and held those whom they encountered as being their social, intellectual (and religious) inferiors.

An exactly contemporary figure, George Gordon Noel, the sixth Baron Byron, born 22 January 1788, commonly known as Lord Byron, or Byron, was an English poet, a Lord and a leading figure in the Romantic movement. Among his best-known works are the lengthy narrative poems 'Don Juan', 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' and the short lyric "She Walks in Beauty".

Byron's wife, Anne Isabella, believed that he had become a "Mussulman". This contention probably arose from his great interest in the Levant and from his travels between 1809 and 1811 in the East that concluded in his 'Turkish Tales'. Determined to study the fascinating Orient, he arrived in Malta and took Arabic lessons. In Albania he made friends with the independent pasha, Ali, who loaned him a bodyguard for his journey to Corinth. But in Greece, if Greece is in the Orient, Byron's friends were Christians, yet there were numerous Turks there, with whom Byron may have made contact. Whether Byron knew Persian is

unclear, but he did include amongst his juvenile reading "Ferdausi, author of the Shahnameh the Perisan Illiad, Sadi, and Hafiz the oriental Anacreon…"[47] Byron had read Rycaut who treats Oriental women as objects of lust. "... books upon the East I had read as well as Rycaut, before I was *ten years old*."[48]

Yet Byron believed in destiny for he outlined his fatalistic creed in 'The Giaour' :

But look — 'tis written on my brow!

There read of Cain the curse and crime,

In characters unworn by Time.[49]

Despite a love of boys,[50] Byron addresses women in his story 'The Giaour' where he contends that Islam treats women as the 'toy'[s] of 'tyrant[s]':

Oh! Who young Leila's glance could read

And keep that portion of his creed ,

Which saith that woman is but dust

A soulless toy for tyrant's lust?

Yet, underneath the text, Byron wrote a footnote that attempts to refute this preposterous charge: ''A vulgar error; the Koran allots at least a third of paradise to well-behaved women'', he adds; but in reality the holy Qur'an states that *all* men and women who qualify may be forgiven their sins and achieve the 'great reward' which means paradise for eternity.[51] Byron's women, Donna Julia, who is partly a Moor, Haidee who is at least half Moor, and Gulbeyez who is completely Turkish, would have to be counted as representative of the Orient and are objects of lust in his, and many Western, eyes. Turkish women in the bath houses where they appeared naked to the traveller, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu,[52] would also have afforded some attraction to Lord Byron.

In 'The Siege' he portrays Minotti as standing "darkly, sternly, and all alone…/o'er the altar stone"[53] while he expects an attack from the Muslims. Minotti, a Christian, is guarded by the icon of the Madonna and child as the "Musselman" attacks in "slaughter" with "steel and flame."[54] The final result of the siege is that both the Christians and the Muslim warriors are destroyed, not before Minotti takes up the torch and uses it to genuflect with the sign of the cross on his breast. The church is destroyed and all the Christians and Muslims are massacred. But Byron makes the outcome a victory for the Christians by claiming that

"Corinth was lost and won"[55] suggesting a rout for the Infidel, and identifying Byron, by his emphases, with the Christian, Venetian and Greek sides.

Byron's peers [and his wife] saw his interest in Islam as eccentric; and his Islam was pseudo, invented, only based on reading and what he had picked up in his travels in the East. A highly complex writer, it remains an incomplete criticism that does not admire his literary genius.

The position of women, where the Church of England is currently debating the enthronement of women as bishops in the church, is not an issue that troubles the Muslim world. The English author Christopher Hitchins in 'Slate' magazine and elsewhere[56] has challenged the Islamic view on women, claiming that they are unable to express themselves fully as individuals. On religion, he says: "Violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism and tribalism and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry, contemptuous of women and coercive toward children: organized religion ought to have a great deal on its conscience."[57] Women's rights are a fundamental prerogative for girls and women in Britain and the wider world. Despite his protestations, and perhaps those of Byron, Muslim women do pray alongside of men, and they are on equal footing with them in all areas – spiritual, social, economic, political, legal and matrimonial.[58] Women fought alongside the Prophet in early Islam and the Prophet's wives hold the highest status in Islam among all.

Ancient Egypt's enlightened civilisation slowly faded into the desert after Cleopatra's reign. The Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley records how one such Empire slowly disappeared beneath the desert: "the lone and level sands stretch far away" just as in Shelley's poem 'Ozymandius' where the decaying ruin of the statue of a former Emperor:

…whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive,[59]

remains damaged and broken. The proud Ozymandius who claims:

My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings:
Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair

lies rotting in the desert, according to "a traveller from an antique land."[60]

The writers of the period were antipathetic to Islam, and had nothing good to say about it: the accent is upon Christianity, and the focus is always towards Christians. Charles Doughty

(1843 – 1926) was an English poet, writer, and traveller who was born in Saxmundham, Suffolk and attended private schools in Laleham and Elstree. His two-volume work written in the style of the King James Bible, is pretentious, damaging and intolerant towards Muslims in Arabia where, he visited, in disguise, on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Doughty claims uncomprehendingly that " – the Moslem religion ever makes numbness and death in some part of the human understanding."[61] He produced another travel book for the late-Victorians entitled 'Travels in Arabia Deserta'.[62] In his travels he meets one Mohammed, from a 'princely family' and reports that:

Mohammed has the four wives of their religious licence, two are hathariyat, 'women of the settlements, and other two are beduwiyat. By strange adventure, one of these townswomen, we have seen, is named "a Christian." This I often heard; but what truth there might be in their words, I cannot tell. What countrywoman she was, I could not learn of them. 'She came to Hayil few years before with her brother, a young man who showing them masteries, and fencing with the lance upon horseback,' had delighted these loose riding and unfeaty Arabians.[63]

He goes on to say rather lugubriously and mean spiritedly that:

Mohammed puts away and takes new wives, at his list, "month by month": howbeit the princely wretch cannot purchase the common blessing! His children are as dead within him, and the dreaded inhabitant of yonder castle remains a desolate man, or less than a man in the midst of his marriages."64]

It is a common preconception among writers of his time that the practice of polygamy - sanctioned, approved and preferred of Arabians was somehow inferior to that of the Christian practice of monogamy. It is to be remembered that, at the time of the Prophet, it was necessary for a number of reasons to permit the soldiers of Islam more than one wife, because many widows had been left bereft after the battles of Badr, Uhud, (625 A D) and so on, and because it allowed for the natural and healthy, but virtuous not carnal, needs of Islamic warriors at that time of the religion's development. The era of Charles Doughty saw the Arabian Peninsula as a source of sexual pleasure and readers would have been interested in the supposed physical advantages to a man of the possession of more than one wife.

Doughty is completely anti-Islamic for in his assessment of Prophet Muhammad, after mentioning his 'barbaric ignorance', 'murderous cruelty' and "our contempt of an hysterical prophetism and polygamous living", he goes on to enquire: "what was the child Mohammed? – a pensive orphan, a herding lad: the young man was sometimes a caravan trader, - wherein he discovered his ambitious meaning, when he would not enter Damascus!"[65]

He continues in a similar anti-prophetic vein:

His was a soaring and wounded (because infirm) spirit, a musing solitary conscience; and his youth was full of dim vaticination of himself and of religious aspiration. [66]

In the chapter ' Setting-Forth from Damascus', in the autumn of 1876, Charles Doughty is the only Christian in a caravan of six thousand Muslim pilgrims riding across "this wild waste earth" by camel to Mecca. He grumbles and complains in a most unpilgrim-like manner, insulting of the prophet:

The caravaners pass the ruined and abandoned kellas with curses between their teeth, which they cast, I know not how justly, at the Haj officers and say "all the birkets leak and there is no water for the hajjaj; every year there is money paid out of the treasury that should be for the maintenance of the buildings; these embezzling pashas swallow the public silver; we may hardly draw now of any cistern before Maan, but after the long marches must send far to seek it, and that we may find is not good to drink." Turkish peculation is notorious in all the Haj service, which somewhat to abate certain Greek Christians, Syrians, are always bursars in Damascus of the great Mohammedan pilgrimage: - this is the law of the road, that all look through their fingers. The decay of the road is also, because much less of the public treasure is now spent for the Haj service. The impoverished Ottoman government has withdrawn the not long established camp at Maan, and greatly diminished the kella allowances; but the yearly cost of the Haj road is said to be yet 50,000 [Pounds Sterling], levied from the province of Syria, where the Christians cry out, it is tyranny that they too must pay from their slender purses, for this seeking hallows of the Moslemîn. A yearly loss to the empire is the surra or "bundles of money" to buy a peaceful passage of the abhorred Beduins: the half part of Western Arabia is fed thereby, and yet it were of more cost, for the military escort to pass "by the sword." The destitute Beduins will abate nothing of their yearly pension: that which was paid to their fathers, they believe should be always due to them out of the treasures of the "Sooltan" and if any less be proffered them they would say "The unfaithful pashas have devoured it!" the pilgrimage should not pass, and none might persuade them, although the Dowla (Sultan's Empire) were perishing. It were news to them that the Sultan of Islam is but a Turk and of strange blood: they take him to be as the personage of a prophet, king of the world by the divine will, unto whom all owe obedience. Malcontent, as has been often seen, they would assault the Haj march or set upon some corner of the camp by night, hoping to drive off a booty of camels: in warfare they beset the strait places, where the firing down of a hundred beggarly matchlocks upon the thick multitude must cost many lives; so an Egyptian army of Ibrahåm Pasha was defeated in the south country of Harb Beduins.

It hardly adds to the understanding of the 'hajj' pilgrimage that, admittedly, contains some hardships, and even these hardships are to be silently endured by the pilgrim in his quest for sanctity and redemption after his penances.

He did not understand the spiritual nature of the ''hajj', nor did Doughty have anything good to say about the language of the Arabs, for he found it unequal to previous times:

Nevertheless in the opinion of perfect [European] scholars, the Arabic tongue in the koran [sic] is somewhat drooping from the freshness and candour which is found in their poets of the generation before Mohammad. The Arabs' speech is at best like the hollow words dropping out of the mouth of a spent old man…"[67]

As we mentioned at the beginning, the Christian West was concerned to portray the East in an unfavourable light and, deliberately or non-deliberately, to obtain adherents to the Christian faith. Actually the purpose of Doughty's mission, because he thought that Islam was a false religion, was really to proselytise for and on behalf of Christianity in the hope that he would return wandering souls to the fold.

The book was championed by T E Lawrence, who caused further editions of the work to be published. He was a great admirer of Doughty and found much of benefit in his reading of it during his travels in Arabia.[68]

I have studied it for ten years, and have grown to consider it a book not like other books, but something particular, a bible of its kind. To turn round now and reckon its merits and demerits seems absurd. I do not think that any traveller in Arabia before or after Mr. Doughty has qualified himself to praise the book - much less to blame it.

Lawrence thought that Doughty was "very really the hero of his journey, and the Arabs knew how great he was", but a calmer appraisal may be that the homosexual Lawrence was hypocritical towards the Arabs and denied them the independence they sought from the British and the French. His duplicity became well known after the First World War with the reneging of his promises of independence to the Arabs, because of the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement between France and Britain.[69]

Lawrence felt that Doughty understood the Arabs well and in the Introduction that he (Lawrence) wrote to 'Travels in Arabia Deserta' he stated that Doughty "went among these Arabs dispassionately and because "Doughty tried to tell the full and exact truth of all that he saw", "the realism of the book is complete."[70]

He puts it clearly in black and white terms to point up Doughty's attitudes to Muslims:

Semites are black and white and not only in vision, with their inner furnishings; black and white not merely in clarity, but in apposition. Their thoughts live easiest among extremes. They inhabit superlatives by choice… They are limited narrow-minded people whose inert intellects lie incuriously fallow… They show no longing for great industry, no organization of mind or body anywhere. They invent no system of philosophy or mythologies… 71]

He ignores the great achievements of Arab scholars, philosophers, physicians, mathematicians, astrologers and explorers, or the great realm of Andalusia, that were known to many people before his work was written.

The Victorian traveler, diplomatist and adventurer, Sir Richard Burton, wrote a personal narrative to bring to the attention of the world the nature of the pilgrimage to Mecca. He, however, makes some very derogatory remarks about the holy pilgrimage and its pilgrims. How the city could be "cursed of God" when it is one of the most holy sites on earth, attended during the 'Hajj' by the largest crowd ever seen on the face of the planet, is inexplicable:

his carauana conteyned threescore and foure thousande camelles, and a hundred Mamalukes to guyde them. And here ought you to consyder that, by the opinion of all men, this citie is greatly cursed of God, as appereth by the great barrennesse thereof, for it is destitute of all maner of fruites and corne. It is scorched with drynesse for lacke of water, and therefore the water is there growen to suche pryce, that you cannot for twelve pence buye as much water as wyll satysfie your thyrst for one day.

The 'Hajj' has always presented organisational and logistic difficulties, but modern day pilgrimages are conducted admirably by the Saudi Arabian authorities whose expenditure on the pilgrimage is a substantial part of its gross domestic output. In 2005 GDP ranged from 210 billion US dollars to 296 billion US dollars. As of 2010, about three million pilgrims[72] participated in the annual pilgrimage to Makkah al Mukkaramah, as it is known in Arabic.

The Black Stone that was embedded in the Ka'aba by Prophet Muhammad is a meteorite that has fallen from the sky and has been taken to symbolise the joining of earth and heaven. For Burton, "it was the place for the pouring forth of tears", and yet this is also a misinterpretation since Muslims revere the stone and make a point to try to touch or kiss it as part of their rituals, and certainly experience a great sense of happiness, as they do so.

The Zamzam water from Hagar's holy well that forms part of the 'Hajj' ritual is referred to as: "the nauseous draught" and he claims that "the flavour is a salt-bitter, much resembling an infusion of a teaspoonful of Epsom salts in a large tumbler of tepid water. Moreover, it is exceedingly "heavy" to the digestion."[73] But it is considered by Muslims all over the world as one of the miraculous sources of water that refreshed Hagar, the wife of Abraham, after she ran back and forth seven times to find water for her thirsty son, Ismail. It has an original, characteristic, fruity, flavour, but to describe it as 'nauseous' is inaccurate. The French Ministry of Health has pronounced the water as fit to drink, and the Saudi Arabian authorities have claimed that there is no danger to health in taking the water.[74]

He confessed that it was possible to steal a piece of the cloth from the 'Kiswa', the embroidered covering of the 'Q'ibla'. The Kiswa is made from black silk and gold and is a covering of the Ka'aba or cubic structure in the centre of the mosque that is the house of Abraham. According to Burton "it is considered a mere peccadillo to purloin a bit of the

venerable stuff",[75] but he avoided direct involvement by arranging with "the boy Mohammad before [I] left Mecca" to buy the purloined souvenir.

Richard Burton's "Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah"[76] exemplifies the British army officer in his exhaustive, military-like account of the 'Hajj'. It is duplicitous, in that entry to the 'hajj' pilgrimage is only permitted to Muslims, and Burton never attested that he was a devotee of the Prophet, but disguised himself as one 'Mirza Abdullah'. His wife refers to this in her introduction to the work which clearly explains the "role" that he took on to obtain his material:

It meant living with his life in his hand, amongst the strangest and wildest companions, adopting their unfamiliar manners, living for nine months in the hottest and most unhealthy climate, upon repulsive food; it meant complete and absolute isolation from everything that makes life tolerable, from all civilisation, from all his natural habits; the brain at high tension, but the mind never wavering from the role he had adopted

So, it is a devious and hypocritical account by one who dissembled in order to bring his record to the West — a region that was unfamiliar with Arabia and its religion — yet it is unfortunate that his account is so obscured and mysteriously tainted against Islam.

Chapter 2: The Nineteenth Century

The Scottish and Victorian historian, Thomas Carlyle, was a particularly well regarded writer who had produced an 1840 work on the French Revolution. Born in Ecclefechan in Dumfries shire, Scotland, he had an early history of being bullied at school, but went on to become a teacher of mathematics. Because he experienced a deep crisis of faith he wrote *Sartor Resartus*. ("The Tailor Retailored") that was published as a serial in 1833-34 in Fraser's Magazine. The novel sets out to be a commentary on the thought and early life of a German philosopher, Diogenes Teufelsdröckh (meaning 'god-born devil-dung') the author of a non-fiction title, "Clothes: their Origin and Influence", but it was in reality a special type of metafiction where the story is about the process of creation.[77] It started to be a new kind of book at the same time fictional and factual, satirical and scholarly, historical and theoretical. One of its strange components was its discussion of its own formal structure, when making the reader face the issue of where 'truth' is to be discovered.

He began to write fiction and embarked on "Cruthers and Jonson", which was one of several false starts in the field of literary fiction. It did not become a satisfactory form of realistic novel and was abandoned. It was not until Carlyle wrote 'Heroes and Hero Worship and the Heroic in History,' that he comes to our attention. Yet, he claims that Islam was spread throughout the world by oppressive means. Many commentators on Islam have claimed that it was a religion spread by violence. This opinion is rejected by numerous authorities who claim that the spread of the Islamic religion was through trade routes into the North African littoral, into Asia via the silk and spice routes and down as far East as Malaysia and China. Evidence from the ‘hadith’, the reported sayings of the Prophet, does however confirm the theoretical justification for the spread of Islam by military might:

Fight in the name of Allah and for the sake of Allah. Fight those who disbelieve in Allah, fight but do not steal from the war booty (before it is shared out), betray, or mutilate. Do not kill children. If you meet your enemy of the mushrikeen, call them to three things, and whichever one of them they respond to, accept that from them and leave them alone. Then call them to Islam and if they respond, accept that from them and leave them alone. If they refuse but they pay the jizyah, then they have responded to you, so accept that from them and leave them alone. If they refuse then seek the help of Allah and fight them…[78]

Yet it might be argued that the Qur’an categorically forbids the spreading of the faith by the sword in Sura 2. 256 which warns: "There must be no coercion in matters of faith. The right

direction is henceforth distinct from error".[79] It would not be necessary to resort to force or violence to promote the religion against oppressors and tyrants, however, because the Qur'an, as we have seen, prohibited Muslims from commencing hostilities: "Fight in the cause of God / Those who fight you / But do not transgress limits / For God loveth not transgressors"[80] as well as: "And Fight them on / Until there is no more / Tumult or oppression, / And there prevail Justice and faith in God."[81] Those terrorists who promote violence with a Qur'anic agenda are therefore taking a line that is unbalanced on the reading of the Qur'an that specifies strict conditions for warfare, and are defying the historical context of sixth-century Arabia's internecine struggles.

But, for Thomas Carlyle, in the fight one needed to get one's sword first before he/she could promote the religion: It had to start with one man and spread from there

I care little about the sword: I will allow a thing to struggle for itself in this world, with any sword or tongue or implement it has, or can lay hold of. We will let it preach, and pamphleteer, and fight, and to the uttermost bestir itself, and do, beak and claws, whatsoever is in it; very sure that it will, in the long-run, conquer nothing which does not deserve to be conquered. What is better than itself, it cannot put away, but only what is worse. In this great Duel, Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong: the thing which is deepest-rooted in Nature, what we call truest, that thing and not the other will be found growing at last.

Sartor Resartus had brought Carlyle fame, but he begins to show an interest in the prophet of light:

The lies (Western slander) which well-meaning zeal has heaped round this man (Muhammad) are disgraceful to ourselves only…
A silent great soul, one of that who cannot but be earnest. He was to kindle the world, the world's Maker had ordered so.

Carlyle recognises the modesty and the humility, the piety and the unimperial attitude of Muhammad as heroic:

They call him a prophet, you say? Why, he stood there face to face with them, here, not enshrined in any mystery, visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes, fighting, counseling, ordering in the midst of them. They must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what ye like. No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three and twenty years of rough, actual trial, I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that of itself.

Although there was no chance of Carlyle or anybody else becoming a Muslim, he still saw the uniqueness of the prophet's message and the need to see Islam in a clear and truthful light:

The spread of the Islamic religion by the sword is not clearly indicated, because W Montgomery Watt points to the number of remaining Christians and other minorities in the countries who would surely have been eliminated if it were the case that Islam was only an aggressive movement. He argues effectively that the evidence of lack of conversions by military might is:

…the remaining Christian communities in these countries. For the first few centuries after the Muslim conquest, the majority of the population of these areas remained Christian. Slowly, they began to take on Islam as their religion and Arabic as their language. Today, large percentages of Christians remain in Egypt (9%), Syria (10%), Lebanon (39%), and Iraq (3%). If those early Muslim conquests (or even later Muslim rulers) forced conversion on anyone, there would be no Christian communities in those countries. Their existence is proof of Islam not spreading by the sword in these areas.[82]

The Welsh writer D Miall Edwards (1873 - 1941) endorsed the views stated by Carlyle in his [Edwards'] book "Christianity and Other Religions" (1923) where he wrote copiously on Islam. His review of religions looks closely at that of Islam where he says that:

…it spread swiftly partly through lawful missionary efforts aided by hot – headed zeal, but to a degree greater than with other religion, by the power of the sword. It was not founded on the sword, as is sometimes said, but rather on the spoken word of the prophet Mohamet.[83]

To which he added:

To this wondrous temple come millions from over all the world. Once they arrive they feast their eyes upon it. They spend the days of their pilgrimage in it, they keep in it if they can, they feel every stone in it with hand and lip; the Black Stone has almost been kissed smooth. They swoon from fervor; they see visions; they lose themselves in trances; some dance; some are immovable. Wonderful is the grip which Mohammetanism has on the child of the desert, and on the many millions who have accepted this religion. [84]

This appears to be a recognition of the attitudes circulating in Wales about the glory of early Islam, its expansion throughout the world and its interest to Welsh people:

To these Arabs belonged a love of learning and invention. From them came governors like Harun al Raschid, the patron of science, and the learned Al Mamun. It was they who preserved the learning of Ancient Greece for the new world; it was they who were the teachers of the new dawn of science, mathematics and geometry.

It is an acknowledgment of the success of the development of Islamic science, which provided much of the activity during the early medieval period, especially in Andalusian Spain.

Muslim Spain gives us an excellent idea of an Islamic society. Its vibrant culture promoted thought and philosophy, encouraged discussion and dissent, science and innovation, motivated rationalism and secular thought, and celebrated music, fashion, style and food. Its rulers and elites sponsored and founded academies, libraries, public baths, concert halls and some of the greatest architecture of Muslimdom. Ibn Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Rushd (1126-1198), the great Andalusian scholar, was a founding father of secular thought in Western Europe, rooted in the religious sciences, Maliki law and jurisprudence, where his school of philosophy is known as Averroism. Ibn Rushd was a master of philosophy, theology, law and jurisprudence, astronomy, geography, mathematics, medicine, [as mentioned in Chapter 1] physics and psychology.

In response to al-Ghazzali, the Muslim scholar, theologian and jurist, he produced his sarcasticaslly entitled work 'Tahafut al-Tahafut' ('Incoherence of the Incoherence') positing that Allah knows everything from the creation of the world to a leaf of a tree or a tiny butterfly or insect. Al-Ghazzali had claimed in 'The Incoherence of the Philosophers' that God has knowledge only of universals and not such specific detail. Ibn Rushd grumbled that Al-Ghazzali's ''confusion and muddling'' and his ''doubtful and perplexing arguments drove many people away from both philosophy and religion.''[85] Ibn Rushd is an exemplar for modern times, and an emblem for open philosophical enquiry, but the period in which he lived was less harmonious than the present day because of its influence of Latin Christendom. He contributed to world civilisation with his commentaries on Aristotle, *al Talkhis*, his judgeship of Cordova in 1182, and his books on law and jurisprudence.[86]

Unfortunately, he was condemned as a heretic by his peers claiming that he possessed recent Jewish ancestry, and in 1194-5 he was charged with apostasy by the Caliph who declared that the study of Philosophy was characterised by *Kufr* - unbelief. He removed to Marrakesh where he continued to practise a Philosophy that was deeply critical of literalism and anthropomorphism in Islam, and specifically in the Qur'an.

He is seen as a founding father of secular thought in Western Europe, where the curiosity about Al-Andalus was at its highest. Al-Andalus gave a space for Christian heresies that were persecuted elsewhere. The Christians of Al-Andalus were also Arabic speakers, which allowed them to interface with Muslim theorists. It was a society of mixed marriages where Christians, Jews and Muslims interrelated secularly, and women interacted freely in public, allowing them to become poets, musicians and philosophers. The idea of a romanticised chivalry also emanated from Muslim Spain, and extended to English [and French] literature in the novels of Scott and Dumas, and later to the late-Victorian novels of masculine action.

Al Ghazzali, believed that the Muslim society of his days was badly affected with a social sickness or a kind of insanity, and that the only hope for a cure was by purging itself by religious sanctity and piety. He claimed in 'The Jewels of the Qur'an' that what he had written in 'The Incoherence' was mere dialecticism and the truth was to be discovered in another of his books titled, 'What Is Concealed from the Unworthy'.

Under the Caliphate of Córdoba, al-Andalus was a fountain of learning, and the city of Córdoba, with its great mosque, was the leading economic and cultural centre in the Mediterranean area and in the Islamic world. It led the intellectual, philosophical, scientific, medical, astronomical, mathematical and culinary world for a period of four hundred years and was the shining light of the medieval, Islamic resurgence. The Muslims had ruled Andalusia for 800 years and has over the years produced all kinds of responses ''from disgust to delicious delusion''.[87] It was a wonderful place, Christians and Jews co-existed with Muslims – perfection on earth. They fostered architecture, libraries with a million volumes, art, literature and culture, which contributed significantly, but of course, not entirely, to the European Renaissance.[88]

When finally the Muslim expulsion from Spain, known as the Morisco Expulsion and Diaspora, took place it broke the hearts of many true Muslims.[89] The poem beneath was written by al-Rundi after Seville was overtaken and captured by Ferdinand the Third of Castile:

Everything declines after reaching perfection…

The tap of the white ablution fount weeps in despair, like a passionate

lover weeping at the departure of the beloved.

Over dwellings emptied of Islam, vacated, whose inhabitants now live in

unbelief

Where the mosques have become churches in which only bells and crosses

are found ...

O who will redress the humiliation of a people who were once powerful, a

people whose condition injustice and tyrants have changed?

Yesterday they were kings in their own homes, but today they are slaves in the land of the infidel!

Were you to see them bewildered, with no one to guide them, wearing the cloth of shame in its different shades,

And were you to behold their weeping when they are sold, it would strike

fear into your heart, and sorrow would seize you.

Alas, many a maiden as fair as the sun when it rises, as though she were

rubies and pearls,
Is led off to abomination by a barbarian against her will, while her eye is in

tears and her heart is stunned.

The heart melts with sorrow at such sights, if there is any Islam or faith in

that heart!

It is clear that al-Rundi was responding to the atrocities committed after the expulsion of December 1248 which amounted to a genocide: homes were put to the flame and destroyed, mosques were deconsecrated, children were separated from their parents, merchants were robbed of their wealth, people were humiliated, and armed insurgents were driven into slavery. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain took place in 1492. By the seventeenth century, however, the remaining population was allowed to maintain their mosques and religious institutions, to retain the use of their language and to continue to live under their own laws and customs. But within seven years these terms had been broken.

In 1499 the Muslim religious leaders of Granada were forced to part with over five thousand valuable and irreplaceable books with ornamental bindings, which were then unceremoniously burned: book burning has a long history! Only a few books on medicine were spared. On 7 September, 1567, King Philip II of Spain issued a royal decree ordering the Moriscos of Granada to cease speaking or writing in Arabic and learn Castilian. The fate of the Muslims was sealed.

The nineteenth century Scottish writer, William Muir, (27 April 1819 – 11 July 1905) the author of 'Mahomet and Islam' claimed that the origins of the Qur'an were threefold – legendary, traditional and historical. In terms of the 'legendary', he claimed that "it contains multitudes of "wild myths", such as the "Light of Mahomet", and the "Cleansing of his Heart". With reference to the traditional he wrote that "the main material of the story is oral recitation, not recorded until Islam had attained to a full growth" and in regard of the historical, he explained that "there are contemporary records of undoubted authenticity of the origin of Islam.[90]

With regard to the contention that the origins of the Qur'an were 'legendary', this is a falsehood, roundly condemned by scholars, since the book was delivered to the prophet directly from the Angel Gabriel, and was certainly not mythical. Clearly in the second case (the traditional) he is partly correct, since it is a central tenet of the faith that the record was maintained orally as well as the Surrahs [chapters] of the book being written down on scraps of bone, palm leaves and so on. As is confirmed by "both Abu Bakr (632-34) and Umar (634-44) [who] made efforts to gather together the scraps of revelation that had been written down by the faithful during the lifetime of the Prophet, on bones, on palm leaves, on potsherds, and whatever other materials were at hand, as well as being preserved in "the breasts of men""[91] With reference to the historical, where he explains that there are "contemporary records of undoubted authenticity" to which we can still refer, it was the third Caliph, Uthman (644-61), who first ordered a group of men at Medina to codify and

standardise the text."[92] It was set down and remains in a pristine state without alteration, and there were never more than seven readings or renditions of the oral tradition in use among the 'Ummah' – the faithful of Islam.[93]

Unfortunately, William Muir continued the old saw that Muhammad "had fallen under the influence of Satanic inspiration". The historian E A Freeman had praised the book as "a great work", yet disputed its "conjectural methodology, particularly the "half timid suggestion" made by Muir that Muhammad had fallen under the influence of Satanic inspiration".[94]

It is incumbent upon us to consider this question from a Christian point of view, and to ask whether the supernatural influence, which ... acted upon the soul of the Arabian prophet may not have proceeded from the Evil One ... Our belief in the power of the Evil One must lead us to consider this as at least one of the possible causes of the fall of Mahomet... into the meshes of deception ... May we conceive that a diabolical influence and inspiration was permitted to enslave the heart of him who had deliberately yielded to the compromise with evil.

It is recorded that Satan tempted the Prophet to utter the following lines after verses 19 and 20 of Sura An-Najm.

Have ye thought upon Al-Lat and Al-Uzzá
and Manāt, the third, the other?
These are the exalted gharāniq, whose intercession is hoped for.

Of course, these lines were later revoked and removed by Muhammad as having been interjected by Satan, and not by the Angel Gabriel, yet it is spurious to suggest that Muhammad had descended "into the meshes of deception", when it involved a temporary aberration which was quickly revised by the prophet. Revelations came to Muhammad in the cave on Mount Hira, and it is not to be supposed that an earth shattering event such as a revelation from the spiritual world could have resulted in Muhammad wanting to obscure or rewrite them. The revelations were terrifying to Muhammad initially - he thought he was going mad - and were to be treated with the utmost respect and reverence.[95]

Reynold Nicholson (1868 – August 27, 1945), was a prominent English orientalist, a student of both Islamic mysticism and Islamic literature. He was reputed to be one of the best Rumi scholars and translators in the English language. Born inKeighley, Yorkshire, he died in 1945. He translated Jalal-ad Din Mohammad Rumi's works in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman Turkish into the English language. His translations of Rumi's "Masnavi",were published in eight volumes between 1925 and 1940. Nicholson wrote two very influential books: 'Literary History of the Arabs' and 'The Mystics of Islam' that contributed to the literature about Islam. His student, Arthur Arberry translated the works of Rumi in the twentieth century and also translated the Qur'an. (See Chapter 4).

It is not until the late nineteenth century that a more even handed view of Muslimdom begins to take shape. Writers began to find elements of Islam worthwhile and interesting, and began to show a more Qur'an based world view leading people in the search for the light and a path to monotheism.

Chapter 3: The late-Victorian period

Moving in to the late-Victorian period between eighteen-eighty and nineteen hundred and one, we begin to find scholars who could look at Islam on its own terms. Whilst nineteenth century writers are largely tarnished with the issue of imperialism, one or two of them like Rudyard Kipling, and his friend Rider Haggard, were largely able to escape a full-blown, imperialistic world view.

For Shamsul Islam, a Professor of Panjab University, Rudyard Kipling's imperialism is only one aspect of his principles of law that challenges the "Dark Powers" that he encounters everywhere in his world. His life in India gave him access to "diverse religious and philosophic traditions",[96] and these two traditions were experienced at first hand rather than in the abstract. Shamsul Islam looks at how Kipling reacted to these traditions and formulated them into his own world outlook that he called 'the law'. In Professor Islam's opinion, Kipling sees "Islam and Muslims in a very positive light:"

Kipling was a real internationalist and his work or ideas are quite relevant to our post 9/11 world. This is particularly shown by his views on Islam and Muslims. Today when Islam and the Islamic world are under fierce Western attack and a new crusade or the so-called 'clash of civilizations' rages on, it is heartening to see how Kipling views Islam and Muslims in a very positive light. Perhaps it is high time that the West should listen to what Kipling has to say on the subject.[97]

In English writers' attitudes to Indian religious traditions there remained much of a reprehensible nature. Oriental religion was a subject for study by "Orientalists", but typical of the early scholars in their attitude of degradation of Indian religion in 'A Christian' was the statement that:

The most enormous and strange impurities; the most villainous frauds and impostures; the most detestable cruelty and injustice; the most filthy and abominable conceits; every corruption and indulgence, are presented to us in their histories, varied in a thousand forms.[98]

Let us consider the lines that appear to ascribe pagan ideas to the East:

My brother kneels, so says Kabir

To stone and brass in heathen-wise. [99]

It suggests that the East was idolatrous and that only Christians were in the right while, in their obeisance to pagan gods, Hindus were beyond the pale.

Kipling, on the strength of the word of Kabir, an Indian himself, holds similar views on religion in India. He takes the attitude that idolatry is the basis of religious practice for his fellow man and: "His God is as his fates assign..." And yet he goes on to modify this by: "His prayer is all the world's and mine,"[100] thereby endorsing a common divinity in all received religion. It is a common theme in Kipling to resort to primitive beliefs in times of stress. For in India, "most folk come back to simpler theories" he held in "The Conversion of Aurelian Mc Goggin".[101] Kipling had a leaning towards the philosophies of the East, while Kim goes in search of the truth with the Lama, and it is suggested that:

All India is full of holy men stammering gospels in strange tongues; shaken and consumed by the fires of their own zeal; dreamers, babblers and visionaries: as it has been from the beginning and will continue to the end. [102]

And also:

"...he is holy and thinks upon matters hidden from thee," says Kim in the Lama's defence travelling in a crowded carriage to Umballa.[103]

What Kim owes to his guru, the Lama "the yellow-headed buck-Brahmin priest", is "wisdom from the Lama's lips". The spiritual guidance as he followed "the traces of the Blessed Feet throughout all India", was received from out of the mouth of the Lama. And, the knowledge he obtained on the road perfected Kim's education, while his future vocation as a "chain man" was prepared for by his accompanying the Brahmin priest.

In the Indian Mutiny, 1857, it is not so much a case of the shortcomings of the British or the legitimacy of the Indians' grievances, but rather that Anglo-Indian fiction shows it as a popular revolt and a large political movement. Importance is placed by the late-Victorian author Meadows Taylor in 'Seeta',[104] on the justification of 'native' soldiers in taking action against measures which were counter to their culture and religion. He was supportive of the Indian soldiers on the threat to class or caste which was represented by the new ammunition which was issued to them, which was lubricated with pig and cow grease. It contravened both Hindu and Muslim people's religious duty to touch such items, and Meadows Taylor acknowledged that the new army regulations introduced in the 1850s were

intrinsically hostile to fundamental Indian social beliefs. These meant that the requirement for Hindu soldiers to use such tainted ammunition threatened the orthodox Hindu with the complete loss of caste and the Muslim soldier with social disgrace.

Another work, Mrs Steel's 'On the Face of the Waters' accepted, comprehendingly, that the ammunition was contaminated in that way. She rejected, as well, the weak contention of the British authorities that they were ignorant of the religious scruples of the Indian people, complaining as she did of "the inconceivable folly and tyranny of initial responses to the soldiers' disaffection".[105] The result was that "85 of the best Indian soldiers at Meerut, for example, were set to toil for ten years in shackles because they refused to be so defiled".

It might be argued that no one needed what Islam could provide as much as Kipling did; with the pain and suffering he endured in the early years at "the house of desolation" in Southsea - the brutal cruelty of that boarding place - his lonely life in India and with his treatment at the hands of "the hated wife, Carrie Kipling" we can observe it.[106] He experienced a decade of hating, pre 1914; and in later life, after the loss of his son, John, at the Battle of Loos during World War I, he suffered from depression. Had he felt the consolation that religion can bring, arguably his redemption could have been procured and he may have escaped the anxiety and neurosis that he continually experienced.

Of the late-Victorian romance writers, Rider Haggard is the most sympathetic towards the Islamic world outlook. In 'She', the character, Ayesha, possesses the supposed traditional qualities of super womanhood: permanent youth, perennial prettiness, supernatural strength; and she is white! Ayesha, whose name is the same as the daughter of the prophet of Islam, is of the Arab nation for which Haggard felt a strong affiinity, regarding it as pure, and culturally in accord with his values, its people being strong, virile and attractive to westerners, a model for Haggard's heroes and protagonists. She appears in historical costume and is very wise. The American critic Morton Cohen[107] sees her as Sagacity itself: Wisdom's Daughter he calls her, referring to another Haggard title. She becomes in one (Jungian) theory, the projection of Haggard's unconscious ideal of the perfect love, an image varying only in small details that man has inherited in part as a legacy of his race's past history - what Jung terms "the race memory".

In 'The Brethren' his character, Rosamund, a young heiress who has half Moorish blood descended from Saladin, is abducted and made hostage in Beirut. Two of her suitors, Wulf and Godwin, the Brethren, travel to Lebanon to rescue her. Masouda, a beautiful widow, arranges to meet the brothers when they arrive. She is a spy for the Saracen, Sinan, but soon falls in love with Godwin. She takes the brothers into Sinan's territory to try to rescue Rosamund who is imprisoned by Sinan there. A Christian in Muslim land, Masouda is portrayed as a sympathetic character, and glimpses of Saladin show him to be a great man with a profound sense of chivalry and honour, as we saw in Chapter 1. Haggard conveys a balanced view of Saladin who displays a generosity of spirit and a valorous character compared to the bloodthirsty Christians, Lozelle and Palmer. As with Haggard's views of African characters which are often complimentary, he finds the Muslim characters attractive, especially since Haggard elevates Rosamund to sainthood and allows Saladin to spare the beleaguered Jerusalem, mirroring facts from the Crusades.

A writer who spent a great deal of energy and time in public works, completing pamphlets on Church and State, and a supportive book on the Salvation Army, 'Regeneration', with a long

section dictated by its founder, General Booth, was one whose spirit and morality were close to the religious ideals of Islam.[108]

To segue from the previous discussion of William Muir [Chapter 1] to the 1980s is challenging, but his theme of the revelations supposedly from Satan takes me to the Indo-English novel, "The Satanic Verses". When Salman Rushdie startled the English literary world on the publication of his novel[109] he immediately faced a Muslim backlash by extremists and others who considered his novel to be disrespectful not only to the then Prime Minister, the late Margaret Thatcher, but to Prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam and revered holy prophet of tens of billions of Muslims, present and past. Not only was it disrespectful, but it called into question the honour and dignity of a beloved and revered man who had united a movement, fought wars in the name of the religion and founded what was to be a major world denomination of believers in the one God. The term 'Satanic Verses', or what Arabic scholars called the '*gharāniq*' verses, was drawn from a supposed reciting of a few verses of the Qur'an that were later withdrawn and discarded by prophet Muhammad as being from the devil, sent to deceive him as if coming from the word of God. The words do not appear in the Qur'an in the original form, but refer to the pagan goddesses: Al-lāt, Uzza, and Manah according to the first biography of Muhammad by Ibn Ishaq. The lines move from disallowance to approvedness, in their amended form:

Have ye thought upon Al-Lat and Al-'Uzza
And Manat, the third, the other?
Are yours the males and His the females?
That indeed were an unfair division!

They are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers, for which Allah hath revealed no warrant.

They follow but a guess and that which (they) themselves desire.

And now the guidance from their Lord hath come unto them. ***[110]***

The phrase 'Satanic verses' was not known to Muslims, but was invented by Western scholars specialising in the work of Arabia and the Near East. For Muslims, the Indo-English Rushdie title remains sacrilegious, not being founded on Islamic jurisprudence or what is termed 'fiqh' in Mohammadan law.[111] And as the Muslim philosopher, Shabbir Akhtar, has pointed out: "the confusion of the sacred and the profane, the good and the evil, allegedly revealed truth and purely human truth supplies the central theme of the novel."[112]

Indeed, Eliot Weinberger argued in 1989, that passages in the novel were an "all-out parodic assault on the basic tenets of Islam."[113] As well as the characterisation of the prophet Muhammad in one chapter on Islam as 'Mahound', a pejorative term from the Crusades, allegedly meaning a conjurer, a magician or a false prophet, in another chapter it uses the names of the prophet's wives, Ayesha, Khadiga and Hafsa taken on by prostitutes in a harem, thereby drawing an unpleasant inference by reason of their analogy, into the work. After initial attacks in India, Muslim groups in Britain and elsewhere in Europe joined protests and

some rallies resulted in the burning of the novel on the streets of Bolton and Bradford, London and other cities.[114] The novel was subsequently banned in India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Bangladesh, Malaysia and in the Sudan.

The account of the character 'Mahound', rather like Salman, is of one who, flirting with religion, even at a late stage attempts a return to the Islamic fold, and tries to attain a reprieve making the following statement which apologised profusely for:

the distress the publication has occasioned to the sincere followers of Islam. Living as we do in a world of many faiths, this experience has served to remind us that we must all be conscious of the sensibilities of others.[115]

The fictional character 'Mahound' is patently a reference to the prophet of Islam derived from apostate sources, and another character, Salman the Persian, refers to Mahound as a kind of false prophet who had "revelations of convenience." Again he says, "Mahound himself had been a businessman and a damned successful one at that, a person to whom organisation and rules come naturally, so how excessively convenient it was that he should come up with such a very businesslike Archangel who handed down the management decisions of this highly corporate, if not corporeal, God,"[116] The novel addresses aspects of Islam that Muslims take as sacrosanct and deliberately associates both biography and exegesis in a derogatory and mocking fashion.

According to Geoffrey Robertson, the barrister who defended a legal challenge against Rushdie, the novel's protagonist, Gibreel, pulverised "by his spiritual need to believe in God and his intellectual inability to return to the faith, finally kills himself." The plot, for Robertson in brief, is "not an advertisement for apostasy."[117]

However, many Muslims, including the influential Kalim Siddiqui of the Muslim Parliament of Great Britain [118] took the view that not only the character, Gibreel, but the author Salman, were apostates, and agreed with the Grand Ayatollah Ruhullah Khomeini who issued a fatwa - a religious edict, on 14 February 1989 - condemning Rushdie to death on account of the defamatory nature of the text and its one sided analysis of Islam in what Merryl Wyn Davies and Ziauddin Sardar refer to as taking "what is defensible but let[ting] the indefensible slide without remarks."[119] The type of selective arguments that an apologist like Rushdie makes are the most puzzling aspects of Islamic intellectual theorisation, according to Wyn Davies and Sardar. Ziauddin Sardar confessed himself to be "transfixed with fear, anger and hatred" on his reading of the novel.[120] He sees it as part of the ''distorted imagination… a deliberate and calculated exercise that impedes mutual understanding between Islam and the West."[121] Ziauddin Sardar thought "that every word, every jibe, every obscenity in the 'Satanic Verses' was directed at me - personally." "Every Muslim would have felt the same", he explained. "Just as people threatened with physical genocide react to defend themselves'', Sardar emphasised.[122]

His co-writer, Merryl Wyn Davies was reduced to tears for days as a result of the "hate-speech" she had encountered in reading the novel, and vowed to counteract it with a book in refutation.[123] As a Welsh convert to Islam, she was incensed that such an attack could be

made against the very foundations of the beliefs of Muslims and particularly one who had studied the tenets of the holy Qur'an carefully and come to her informed decision to 'revert' to Islam, because all believers hold that one is born originally as a Muslim – one who submits to God. The philosopher, Shabbir Akhtar, in his admonitory work 'Be Careful with Muhammad' also warned: "If one handles precious things, one does well to handle them with care."[124]

Convinced of its apostasy, Kalim Siddiqui and others at the Muslim Parliament including Ghayasuddin Siddiqui [no relative] continued to support the 'fatwa' claiming that he had no authority to revoke the Islamic proclamation and that Rushdie's work was derogatory and defaming of Islam. Ghayasuddin Siddiqui added: "We support the fatwa but at the same time we have always said that Muslims in this country should abide by the law and not carry out the killing." He continued: "It has always been the situation that the fatwa remains in operation and valid."[125]

It was not, despite Siddiqui, until 2000 that the Islamic edict was allowed to be quietly dropped, but not until after the deaths of Hitoshi Igarashi and Ettore Capriolo, Rushdie's Japanese and Italian translators, and the shooting and serious wounding of William Nygaard, his publisher in Norway, as well as countless other individuals in India and elsewhere.[126]

Of course, Rushdie's was not the first racist attack in Britain, for the seventies had seen the era of 'Paki bashing', there had been the death in Handsworth of a West Indian youth, the stabbing of Tausir Ali in Bromley and the events around the Notting Hill carnival, as well as the later attacks in 1985 at Broadwater Farm and the Stephen Lawrence affair, leaving a fraught and difficult time in Black – British relationships.[127]

The whole issue that became so contentious revolves around the cultural requirement for freedom of speech in the West versus the belief by many Muslims throughout the world that there exists a law in all countries that "prohibits any publications or utterances that tend to ridicule or defame Islam". The United Kingdom had laws that protected blasphemy against the Christian religion, but the blasphemy laws in England did not provide enough cover for a defence against the novel's supposed sacrilegious nature to provide redress to Muslims. The Attorney General did not allow a case to be put for blasphemy, even though Muslim jurists had applied for a case to be heard.

Its publishers, Penguin, were always adamant for its publication to stand and would brook no revocation. There appeared to be a determination to publish at any cost. Its chief executive officer, Peter Mayer, stated: "Any climb down now will only encourage future terrorist attacks by individuals or groups offended for whatever reason by other books that we or any other publisher might publish." He claimed that if "we capitulate there will be no publishing as we know it."

He admitted that "Muslims needed protection from discrimination and hatred",[128] but it is just strange that he did not take such a consistent position over publications concerned with right wing terrorism, or, indeed, over revisionism of the Holocaust. It is also bizarre that the insistence on publishing at all costs, despite the need for caution and due diligence, went against every faith calling for forbearance, charity and humility. The contention that only secular humanism was an acceptable justification for all publishing meant that social accountability was minimal. The fundamental insistence on total freedom of expression

became a similarly fundamentalist, extremist position, like the one it was supposed to be attacking.[129]

So, in other words, Peter Mayer was arguing for total freedom without any responsibility. Muslims today have not permitted further insults to go unaccounted for, however. To contend that, thereby, they undermine values of tolerance and forgiveness is neither to understand the depth of hurt experienced by the Muslim community, nor to recognise the deep passion and love that they hold for their spiritual leader.[130] They have, to follow Ziauddin Sardar, drawn a line under secularism as to how far it may go in its reaction to Islam and no further. For "Islam is not Christianity", they will no longer allow the mistreatment and "violence of the history, tradition and the sacred territory of Islam."[131]

The novel, despite some artistic merit, shows the cultural neuroses and insecurities of a post-colonial writer deracinated from his Muslim religious roots, and through the English public school route shunted into a hybrid condition where he is of neither East nor West, and floundering to explain his predicament. Gibreel Farishta, "the tuneless soloist" and "buttony, pursed Mr Saladin Chamcha" on board a fictionally doomed plane are oddly the precursors of that other airplane disaster of 11 September 2001 in which Mohammad Atta and Hani Hanjour, the erstwhile passengers on hijacked aeroplanes that fly into the ground, and who, as a coda to the story threaten: "Here we come! Those bastards down there won't know what hit them. Meteor or lightening or threat of God."[132] It remains a metaphor for the coming attacks on the Twin Towers that were to devastate Muslim - Christian relations up to now and led, contrarily, to the backlash against Islamic fundamentalism in US attacks on Afghanistan in October 2001 and Iraq in May 2003: metaphor and simile as predictors of a future Islamic/Christian tragedy.

His fictional character Bilal X, might be taken to be metaphor for, or at least an allusion to, Cat Stevens, or Yusuf Islam as he is now known, the convert to Islam. He is portrayed as a famous former pop singer who has converted to Islam, and is described by Salman as the "favored lieutenant" of "the Imam", a character modeled on the Shi'ite Ayatollah, Ruhollah Khomeini. His "well-nourished, highly trained" voice might appear to be "a weapon of the West turned against its makers."[133] This caricature may have been responsible for Stevens's reaction to the 'fatwa' which was allegedly supportive, but hotly denied by Yusuf Islam[134] at the time. Cat Stevens was the author of the seventies' ballad that expressed the directionlessness, the rootlessness and the search for a spiritual element that characterised the decade, and led to his discovery of the Qur'an:

… and I'm on the road to find out
Then I found my head one day when I wasn't even trying
And here I have to say, 'cause there is no use in lying, lying

Yes the answer lies within, so why not take a look now?
Kick out the devil's sin, pick up, pick up a good book now

Yes the - answer - lies - within, so why not take a look now?
Kick out the devil's sin, pick up, pick up The Good Book now! [135]

The lines suggest that a transition from international pop star to Islamic champion and educationalist were possible if one looked for redemption in the pages of the holy Qur'an. In fact, Yusuf's brother, David Gordon, brought him a copy of the Qur'anfor his birthday after a visit to Jerusalem; he took to it immediately, and began his journey to Islam and his ongoing work for the Muslim community.

Salman Rushdie's novel brings home tensions in the emigrant community between himself and the 'Other' or between 'us' and 'them'. He/she can either identify with and integrate into an England (nevertheless of multicultural pluralism), or remain within his/her own cultural mindset. Whilst Gibreel Farishta tries to take the latter position of holding on to his cultural identity and not adapting to English culture, Saladin Chamcha takes the former route of abandoning his identity and going with the flow. Saladin grows horns and a hoof[136] whilst Gibreel is awarded a halo for his non-adaptation. The narrator resumes:

Should we say that these are two fundamentally different types of self? Might we not agree that Gibreel,…- is joined to and arises from his past;..- so that his is still a self, which for our present purposes, we may describe as true…whereas Saladin Chamcha is a creature of selected discontinuities, a willing re-invention; his preferred revolt against history being what makes him, in our chosen idiom, false,…- While Gibreel, to follow the logic of our established terminology, is to be considered 'good' by wishing to remain, for all his vicissitudes, at bottom an untranslated man. – But, and again but; this sounds dangerously like an intentionalist fallacy? Such distinctions resting as they must on an idea of the self as being (ideally) his vicissitudes, at bottom an untranslated man – non-hybrid, 'pure', —an utterly fantastic notion! —cannot, must not, suffice.[137]

So, perhaps after twenty-five years the time has come to forgive Salman Rushdie; but Shabbir Akhtar has said that "any Muslim who fails to be offended by Rushdie's book ceases on account of that fact" [that the Qur'an is the source and inspiration of Muslim teaching and that Muslims must interpret its 'imperatives' as they may] "to be a Muslim": disinheritance by literary fatwa, and therefore an unconditional pardon can still not be issued by the fundamentalists.

The reverse position to Saladin Chamcha, where an Englishman reverts to an alien culture, has been described by T E Lawrence as a chameleon philosophy in 'Seven Pillars of Wisdom'[138]. It is an attempt to fully integrate with the 'Other', but, at the same time, it is a duplicitous scheme where the Englishman pretends to take on the aspects of the foreigner, while, all along, hoping that they will become like him:

A man who gives himself to be in possession of aliens leads a Yahoo life, having bartered his soul to a brute-master. He is not of them. He may stand against them, persuade himself of a mission, batter and twist them into something which they, of their own accord, would not have been. Then he is exploiting his old environment to press them out of theirs. Or, after my model, he may imitate them so well that they spuriously imitate him back. Then he is giving away his own environment: pretending to theirs; and pretences are hollow, worthless things.

In neither case does he do a thing of himself, nor a thing so clean as to be his own (without thought of conversion), letting them take what action or reaction they please from the silent example.

An earlier work by Salmon Rushdie was entitled 'Midnight's Children'. Annoying Mrs Indira Ghandi, the Indian Premier, was Salman's strategy with his rebarbative novel. Rushdie was sued successfully in London for this piece of libel, and, indeed, Rushdie recognised in a personal statement that "incorporating such momentarily 'hot' contemporary material in the novel was a risk – and by that I meant a *literary* risk, not a legal one."[139] The general purport of "Midnight's Children" is to show two parallel lives in the reborn India of 1947: Saleem Sinai and his future wife, Padma. It is an allegory of the rebirth of India before and after Partition and employs 'magic realism' as a plot device. Those children who were born at the hour of midnight on the day of Partition were endowed with special psychic powers. Saleem is riven by doubt: "He was caught in a strange middle ground, trapped between belief and disbelief, and this was only a charade after all."[140] His novel steers away from any certainties, maintains doubt at all times, and is a paean to loss of faith, uncertainty, migration and discontinuity. An incoherent story, it has links, through Islamic allegory, to 'The Satanic Verses' and veers between two Indias, pre and post Independence.

The early part of the story sees Saleem Sinai ("Snomouse, Stainface, Baldy, Buddha or even Pieces of the Moon") at prayer, and others mock his prostrations and his recitation of 'Al Fatihah' - the Opening, the first verses of the Quran which are basic principles of the religion: Bismillah rahmana rahim - Praise be to Allah Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds: Al hamdu lillahi rabbil 'alamin – Most Gracious Most Merciful: Maalik yawm al-deen - Master of the Day of Judgment.[141] The text makes an allegory of the holy Quran and turns it into a mockery: "here was Ingrid, her face scorning him for this Mecca – turned parroting; here their friends Oskar and Ilse Lubin the anarchists, mocking his prayer with their anti-ideologies."

But it is not enough to say that this is a fiction; there is a direct connection between the holy text and its subsumption by his scathing friends – a situation that he does not defend or deny. Salman Rushdie's literary ability is not doubted, but deference to people's susceptibilities is not one of his strong areas, nor his political interface with religion. The effect of his book on the Muslim community, as worthy of burning for its insult on the prophet, remains just as US Pastor Terry Jones's book "Islam is of the Devil" remains an unworthy symbolism for his burning of the Quran.[142] In a fictional response to an actual book burning, Samad Iqbal in Zadie Smith's 'White Teeth' declares to his wife, Alsana Begum, ''It is not a matter of letting others live. It is a matter of protecting one's culture, shielding one's religion from abuse. Not that you'd know anything about that, naturally.''[143]

'Midnight's Children' is equally scathing of Mahatma Ghandi, the great Indian pacifist, and Rushdie comments that "even language obeys the instructions of Ghandiji". He goes on to accuse Kashmiris of cowardice and the British of stifling political resistance [this last not an unfair criticism, actually]:

Aziz thought the Indians have fought for the British; so many of them have seen the world by now, and been tainted by Abroad. They will not easily go back to the old world. The British are wrong to try and turn back the clock. 'It was a mistake to pass the Rowlatt Act,' he

murmurs. 'What rowlatt?' wails Naseem. 'This is nonsense where I'm concerned!' 'Against political agitation,' Aziz explains, and returns to his thoughts. Tai once said: 'Kashmiris are different. Cowards, for instance. Put a gun in a Kashmiri's hand and it will have to go off by itself – he'll never dare to pull the trigger. We are not like Indians, always making battles.' Aziz, with Tai in his head, does not feel Indian, Kashmir, after all, is not strictly speaking a part of the Empire, but an independent princely state. He is not sure if the hartal of pamphlet mosque wall newspaper is his fight, even though he is in occupied territory now. He turns from the window… To see Naseem weeping into a pillow. [144]

To move on, a retrospective of the events by Salman Rushdie in 2012 entitled 'Joseph Anton' attempts reconciliation between then and now and continues to address the fatwa of Ayatollah Khomeini as "the edict of a cruel and dying old man."[145] He compares the Imam in 'The Satanic Verses' as: "An imam grown monstrous, his gigantic mouth eating his own revolution." Narrated oddly in the third person, Joseph Anton is a composite name reduced from Joseph Conrad and Anton Chekov, two far more famous writers than Rushdie. It serves as a memoir to Salman's time as a fugitive and is clearly a self appraisal of the literary character *he* became in the western cultural pantheon.

There are four nations in the United Kingdom that contribute to literature in the English language. The Muslim convert from Wales, Merryl Wyn Davies, looks at the situation of Muslims in Britain and concludes that the religionists have gone on to the defensive because they have needed to rally together to protect themselves against the constant criticism and what has become the nasty word 'Islamophobia', or the diversionary word 'Orientalism' in Western – Muslim relations. Wyn Davies says that Orientalism has caused a problem for Muslims because it has created a sense of apartness for Muslim communities. She sees Orientalism as a mélange of propaganda and argument that became a justification for Christianity to retake the Holy lands:

The basic representation of Muslims that emerged was of militant, barbaric fanatics, corrupt, effete sensualists, people who lived contrary to the natural law — a concept defined by canon laws and philosophy of Christianity. Even when Muslims were portrayed in popular medieval literature as equivalents of knightly Western counterparts, they were completely Other because they were beyond the pale of Christianity, addicted to wrong religion which they persisted in passionately believing. The failings of Muslims stemmed from their beliefs. What medieval Europe made of Islam and Muslims has been described by British historian Norman Davies as 'knowledgeable ignorance', defining a thing as something it could not possibly be, when the means to know it differently were available.

These attitudes continued to appear, she states, because of the growth of the Ottoman Empire with its control of access to the Far East, and also in the period of colonialism:

Orientalism is not simply prejudice, it is also knowledge. The real problem with Orientalism and the authority it gives to Western experts on Islam and Muslim affairs is not that it is knowledge, but that it is knowledge that does not appreciate that it is wrong. The authority of Orientalism is that it makes Muslims incomprehensible yet predictable… There is a sense in which Osama bin Laden is utterly predictable, since he embodies so many of the essential details of the time-honoured image of what the West expects from a Muslim iconoclast in ideas, rhetoric and action.

It is clear that Wyn Davies regards the West and Islam to be in an irresolvable contest and that Orientalism is a tool for managing other cultures and peoples. For Wyn Davies, Orientalism has become a greater problem that covers every Muslim's sense of the disinheritance and the alienation, not only of radical extremists but of ordinary people":

the authority of Orientalism as knowledge has immense practical consequences. It structures the learned books as well as the popular press; it finds its outlets in plasterboard movie villains as well as strategic political thinking. But most of all it inhibits constrains and provides an edge of fear and discomfort in the relations between ordinary people, the non-Muslim and Muslim populations of Western nations. Racism and discrimination in towns and cities across Europe and North America exist not only in the attitudes and actions of an obnoxious extreme fringe: they can be implicit in the commonplace attitudes and information of well- meaning and well-intentioned nice, sensible people. But in recent years Orientalism has become an even greater problem. It has become the scapegoat, the shield and sword of Muslims themselves. Among Muslims the existence of Orientalism has become the justification for every sense of grievance, a source of encouragement for nostalgic romanticism about the perfections of Muslim civilization in history and hence a recruiting agent for a wide variety of Islamic movements. It has generated a sense of exclusivity, of being apart and different within Muslim communities and societies that has no precedent either in Islam as religion or Muslim history. [146]

Wyn Davies sees the Muslim community as having descended into a defensive, reactive rather than proactive, state in continual opposition to those who are not 'of' the Muslim populations:

So, what we have is not a clash of civilizations but mutual complicity in proliferating mutual incomprehension. On both sides, wilful, determined, distorted, imaginings and knowledgeable ignorance propels, fuels and then justifies aggression, oppression, dispossession and dehumanization of anyone who is not 'us'. The consequences are real, appalling human suffering whether in Palestine or Israel, Baghdad or New York or on the streets of Britain.[147]

Wyn Davies's assessment was accurate and timely. Apart from 'Wilful Imaginings', she wrote three books with Ziauddin Sardar by way of reply to the criticism of Islam expounded by Rushdie, "The No-Nonsense Guide to Islam', 'American Dream, Global Disaster' and 'Why Do People Hate America?' that looked into the problem of why the actions of the United States, particularly in its foreign policy, have led to such a fraught and anxious response among disaffected and thinking people to policies such as "Shock and Awe" in Iraq, to pre-emptive strikes against fundamentalist Muslim leaders in foreign lands and, latterly to drone strikes by unmanned aircraft which kill and maim innocent bystanders willy nilly and

lead to a sense of despair that the mightiest military machine in the world, generally regarded as the world's policeman, could turn into the world's terrorist.

In Hanif Kureishi's novel 'Something to Tell You',[148] the narrator explains the British attitude to race: "officially, as it were, we were called immigrants, I think. Later, for political reasons we were "blacks"… In Britain we were still called Asians, though we're no more Asian than the English are European. It was a long time before we became known as Muslims, a new *imprimateur,* and then for political reasons." For the Muslim television producer and writer, Kenan Malik, to be black "was for us not an ethnic label but a political badge (although we never defined who exactly could wear that badge). Unlike our parents' generation, who had largely put up with discrimination, we were fierce in our opposition to racism.'' But he goes on to say that he was quite antipathetic to the religious and cultural traditions of his parents, too.[149]

It does seem, now the issue of 'Islamophobia' is so prevalent, that an even new turn is taking place where the Muslim is becoming a figure of distrust, where every Afghani or Arabic-looking person is treated with suspicion, and even disgust; when the finger is pointed at anyone wearing an 'abaya' or veil, and as statistics reveal that policemen are up to 28 times more likely to use 'Stop-and-Search' powers against ethnic, minority and black people than white people.[150]

Thus, when minority groups make an attack to draw attention to foreign policy matters, the reaction from angry sections of the unenlightened public — for whom every Islamic fundamentalist or Salafist attack is an indication that Muslims are evil — is often disproportionate, yet understandable. The recent events, as I write, in May 2013 when a loyal British soldier has been brutally murdered outside his barracks in Woolwich, London, by a terrorist who shouted that: "The reason we have killed this man today is because Muslims are dying daily by British soldiers. And this British soldier is one. It is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. By Allah, we swear by the almighty Allah we will never stop fighting until you leave us alone'',[151] are deeply worrying.

A woman who confronted the terrorist with calm determination reasoned:

I don't think these men have rejected Britain, I don't think they ever accepted it, even though they were born and raised here. Maybe converting to Islam was the only way they could find to be different, a bit like teenagers rebelling against their parents? They are bitter with Britain because of their life growing up. I think they are using Islam as an excuse. This third generation from immigrant families has had enough, it seems, and are now going back to their own roots…[152]

This action and these remarks by the terrorist are roundly condemned by all Muslim NGOs and organisations, who stress that we are favoured to be living in a highly liberal climate in England, taking the benefits of hospitals, schools, welfare and, indirectly, overseas aid. We need to acknowledge that such attacks are totally unIslamic and that we require as a community to recognise, engage with, and fundamentally, yes, fundamentally with no pun intended, because their fundamentalism is incorrect, reform those elements who are

radicalised, diverted, and distorted in their one-eyed vision of the peace-loving religion of Islam. Their hermeneutics is based on a single-line, out-of-context, interpretation of the Qur'an, which through 'mysterious irrationality' and misplaced emotion, on their side, turns to violent action.

Their fundamentalism is incorrect because, in Islam, to kill one person, even by means of suicide, is to kill the whole of mankind. The only way that warfare is permitted is by states and state agencies who are arraigned in battle, in uniform, against each other in man to man combat. This rules out independent action by groups or individuals such as we have seen by terrorists and even affiliated terrorist groups such as al Qaeda and al Shabab. So how are Muslims to gain redress for the perceived grievances they feel, it may be asked. The way forward is through the reeducation of youth and young men and women in the Madrassas (places of Islamic learning) and mosques and for youth leaders and preachers to come to grips very thoroughly with them to channel their energies and activities into proper Islamic activity. This may require modern technology such as the use of social media to reinforce such teachings, but urgency and serious application are needed from the Muslim community. Some have suggested that there is a secret admiration by many ordinary Muslims for the activities of terrorists, as Merryl Wyn Davies has hinted, (''Racism and discrimination … can be implicit in the commonplace attitudes and information of well- meaning and well-intentioned nice, sensible people'') such as activities in resisting perceived offences against Muslims, but this is improper because it is Islamically unsound.

It can appear now that all Muslims are terrorists and that a backlash against Islam and Muslims has set in; and yet police crime records for 2005 - 2006, covering the aftermath of the London bus attacks, record that only 43 religiously aggravated crimes were prosecuted in that period, and that Muslims were the victims in only eighteen of those. Just 41.86% of the religiously aggravated attacks, but a surprisingly small percentage, 0.00018 of the total daily population of London – ten million.

What these figures may reveal is that the Metropolitan Police's narrative is one where effective policing and community engagement have kept the situation well under control,[153] or, alternatively, that religiously motivated hate crimes are not flagged up as such, being lost in other categories, and therefore many more attacks occur than are recorded under this banner. A recent survey by the police entitled the ''British Crime Survey'' suggests that there were 260,000 religiously motivated hate crimes in 2010/11, but it pointed out that the police were notified of less than 50% of these crimes and that a considerable number more were reported, but not included within the police hate crime data. [154]

Chapter 4

The Twentieth Century

By the twentieth century attitudes to Islam had begun to turn more in its favour. Sir George Bernard Shaw, the cranky, intrepid campaigner for social progress and Socialist thinker, 'the irresponsible clown GBS',[155] demonstrated a positive and prescient approach to the future of British Islam. Born into an aristocratic Irish family in Dublin in 1856, he became one of the most influential playwrights and writers of the early twentieth century London literary, artistic and local political scene. He spent the first twenty years of his life in Ireland, but he felt that he was 'a foreigner in every other country'. His genealogical line descended from firmly Protestant stock. So as a committed teetotaler and fully bearded, he was already in shape to be a good Muslim; he believed in fresh air, sensible woolen clothes, cycling and moral probity, but his arrogance and self regard were not Islamic traits. And as the author of the stage play 'Pygmalion' that was turned into the musical 'My Fair Lady', his influence on British culture was stratospheric. He made a very strong declaration, in an interview conducted in Mombasa, in favour of Prophet Muhammad that has remained a rallying point in British – Islamic relations until today:

I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capability to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. The world must doubtless attach high value to the predictions of great men like me. I have prophesied about the faith of Muhammad that it would be acceptable to the Europe of to-morrow as it is beginning to be acceptable to the Europe of to-day. The medieval ecclesiastics, either through ignorance or bigotry, painted Muhammadanism in the darkest colours. They were in fact trained both to hate the man Muhammad and his religion. To them Muhammad was Anti-Christ. I have studied him — the wonderful man, and in my opinion far from being an Anti-Christ he must be called the Saviour of Humanity. I believe that if a man like him were to assume the dictatorship of the modern world he would succeed in solving its problems in a way that would bring it the much-needed peace and happiness. But to proceed, it was in the 19th century that honest thinkers like Carlyle, Goethe and Gibbon perceived intrinsic worth in the religion of Muhammad, and thus there was some change for the better in the European attitude towards Islam. But the Europe of the present century is far advanced. It is beginning to be enamoured of the creed of Muhammad.[156]

He also continued in the same interview to say that: "I also very much admire the forcible and striking diction of the Quoran. What elegant grace and beauty characterises that passage

which depicts the dreadful scene of the doomsday field, …"[157] His interviewer confirmed that Shaw had previously expressed the sentiment that: "The future religion of the educated cultured, and enlightened people will be Islam" and continued, "I would like to speak to you about the profound philosophy and psychological truths that the Quoran expounds, so that a gifted and erudite savant of your parts and genius, perfectly familiar with the tastes and mental tendencies of the civilised world can present them to it in an effective and desirable manner."[158]

Bernard Shaw's attitude to morality, or at least middle class morality, can be gauged from his play 'Pygmalion', in which Eliza Dolittle, the daughter of dustman Alfred P Dolittle is taken on by the English language Professor, Henry Higgins to transform her from a street flower seller into 'a lady in a flower shop' or 'a duchess at an ambassador's garden party'. The father of the flower girl soon attends at Professor Higgins' house at 27A Wimpole Street and, despite some prevarication by Higgins and his friend Colonel Pickering, declaims the immortal lines: "I'm willing to tell you. I'm wanting to tell you. I'm waiting to tell you."

The purpose of the dustman's visit is to offer to hand over his daughter to the famous linguist in return for payment:

DOOLITTLE. …I can see you're one of the straight sort, Governor. Well, what's a five pound note to you? And what's Eliza to me? [He returns to his chair and sits down judicially].

PICKERING. I think you ought to know, Doolittle, that Mr. Higgins's intentions are entirely honorable.

DOOLITTLE. Course they are, Governor. If I thought they wasn't, I'd ask fifty.

HIGGINS [revolted] Do you mean to say, you callous rascal, that you would sell your daughter for 50 pounds?

DOOLITTLE. Not in a general way I wouldn't; but to oblige a gentleman like you I'd do a good deal, I do assure you.

PICKERING. Have you no morals, man?

DOOLITTLE [unabashed] Can't afford them, Governor. Neither could you if you was as poor as me. Not that I mean any harm, you know. But if Liza is going to have a bit out of this, why not me too?

HIGGINS [troubled] I don't know what to do, Pickering. There can be no question that as a matter of morals it's a positive crime to give this chap a farthing. And yet I feel a sort of rough justice in his claim.

DOOLITTLE. That's it, Governor. That's all I say. A father's heart, as it were.

PICKERING. Well, I know the feeling; but really it seems hardly right—

This is the point at which Shaw explains his concept of the ‘deserving’ poor, those who are entitled to receive charity, and the ‘undeserving’ poor who can claim and receive nothing…

DOOLITTLE. Don't say that, Governor. Don't look at it that way. What am I, Governors both? I ask you, what am I? I'm one of the undeserving poor: that's what I am. Think of what that means to a man. It means that he's up agen middle class morality all the time. If there's anything going, and I put in for a bit of it, it's always the same story: "You're undeserving; so you can't have it." But my needs is as great as the most deserving widow's that ever got money out of six different charities in one week for the death of the same husband. I don't need less than a deserving man: I need more. I don't eat less hearty than him; and I drink a lot more. What is middle class morality? Just an excuse for never giving me anything. Therefore, I ask you, as two gentlemen, not to play that game on me. I'm playing straight with you. I ain't pretending to be deserving. I'm undeserving; and I mean to go on being undeserving. I like it; and that's the truth. Will you take advantage of a man's nature to do him out of the price of his own daughter what he's brought up and fed and clothed by the sweat of his brow until she's growed big enough to be interesting to you two gentlemen? Is five pounds unreasonable? I put it to you; and I leave it to you.

So Higgins agrees to take on the flower girl as a pupil upon payment of a five pound note, but the moral complications of the arrangement, with a young woman living under his auspices, soon arise, as the song in the musical has it:

Let a woman in your life, and you're up against a wall,
make a plan and you will find,
that she has something else in mind,
and so rather than do either you do something else
that neither likes at all. You want to talk of Keats and Milton,
she only wants to talk of love,
You go to see a play or ballet, and spend it searching
for her glove, Let a woman in your life
and you invite eternal strife… [159]

The original text of the play declares that if the bachelor, Higgins, lets a woman make friends with him: “she becomes jealous, exacting, suspicious, and a damned nuisance.” But he finds that as soon as he allows himself in turn to make friends with a woman, he becomes: “selfish and tyrannical. Women upset everything. When you let them into your life, you find that the woman is driving at one thing and you're driving at another.”[160]

Later on when Alfred Dolittle becomes the beneficiary of a Wannafella inheritance that only involves giving the occasional lecture, his stance becomes that of conformity to middle class morality: now he says:

DOOLITTLE. It ain't the lecturing I mind. I'll lecture them blue in the face, I will, and not turn a hair. It's making a gentleman of me that I object to. Who asked him to make a gentleman of me? I was happy. I was free. I touched pretty nigh everybody for money when I wanted it, same as I touched you, Henry Higgins. Now I am worrited; tied neck and heels; and everybody touches me for money. It's a fine thing for you, says my solicitor. Is it? says I. You mean it's a good thing for you, I says. When I was a poor man and had a solicitor once when they found a pram in the dust cart, he got me off, and got shut of me and got me shut of him as quick as he could. Same with the doctors: used to shove me out of the hospital before I could hardly stand on my legs, and nothing to pay. Now they finds out that I'm not a healthy man and can't live unless they looks after me twice a day. In the house I'm not let do a hand's turn for myself: somebody else must do it and touch me for it. A year ago I hadn't a relative in the world except two or three that wouldn't speak to me. Now I've fifty, and not a decent week's wages among the lot of them. I have to live for others and not for myself: that's middle class morality.

But the prospect of giving up his new found wealth and middle class status is too difficult to contemplate, so he explains his predicament, whilst Higgins's mother tries to placate him::

MRS. HIGGINS. But, my dear Mr. Doolittle, you need not suffer all this if you are really in earnest. Nobody can force you to accept this bequest. You can repudiate it. Isn't that so, Colonel Pickering?

PICKERING. I believe so.

DOOLITTLE [softening his manner in deference to her sex] That's the tragedy of it, ma'am. It's easy to say chuck it; but I haven't the nerve. Which one of us has? We're all intimidated. Intimidated, ma'am: that's what we are. What is there for me if I chuck it but the workhouse in my old age? I have to dye my hair already to keep my job as a dustman. If I was one of the deserving poor, and had put by a bit, I could chuck it; but then why should I, acause the deserving poor might as well be millionaires for all the happiness they ever has. They don't know what happiness is. But I, as one of the undeserving poor, have nothing between me and the pauper's uniform but this here blasted three thousand a year that shoves me into the middle class. (Excuse the expression, ma'am: you'd use it yourself if you had my provocation). They've got you every way you turn: it's a choice between the Skilly of the workhouse and the Char Bydis of the middle class; and I haven't the nerve for the workhouse. Intimidated: that's what I am. Broke. Bought up. Happier men than me will call for my dust, and touch me for their tip; and I'll look on helpless, and envy them. And that's what your son has brought me to. [He is overcome by emotion].

The great moralist, Shaw, had a keen understanding of the effects of money on morality and the ironies of different social positions, such as the Higgins's, the Eynsford Hills', the Dolittle's and the Pickering's, where, like in Islam, rich and poor each have their proper

station, especially in Edwardian England where the divide between rich and poor was quite marked and where it was difficult to rise between classes of society, except perhaps by marriage or extra – marital relationships.

Sufism began to be a preoccupation of writers in the early twentieth century, and an interest in dervishes and their Sufi whirling dances developed. These remain customary dances performed in a worshipping ritual or dance through which path dervishes try to reach a kind of *nirvana*, or fount of excellence, where all earthly cares have departed and the spiritual world has been achieved. Among followers of the thirteenth century Jalal-ad Din Mohammad Rumi,[161] the mysterious Iranian poet and spiritual founder of Sufism, was Arthur Arberry. Born in Portsmouth on 12 May 1905, he became Professor of Classical Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. His translation of the Holy Qu'ran, 'The Koran Interpreted', was respected from a non Muslim author. Arberry caught quite well the cadences and rhythms of the Quran and no doubt it was a competent and professional translation or 'interpretation.'

But, of course, his task was complicated because of the human factor which becomes more difficult when it is realised that, firstly, Arabic words often have more than one meaning, secondly, the grammar of Arabic is sophisticated with extensive conjugations, where, for example, plurals are more abundant depending on the number involved whether one, a couple, two or three or more, thirdly, the vocabulary is extremely rich, and because the uses of words have changed between the original, Classic Arabic and the modern, and lastly because the original meaning of the Quranic verse may not be evident to non-native speakers due to cultural, contextual, historical, religious and other undefined reasons. It is even the case that some words and fragments in the holy text like 'Alif Lam Mim' (الم) and Ha Mim (حم)[162] are unclear and not even fully understood by the Arabic reader.

The conflict arises also between different translations of the Arabic text of the received word of God, where, to take the well known and somewhat contentious example , the word 'wadarabu' (وَٱضْرِبُو) 'and beat, chastise or flog /slap/hit/touch them' has been variously translated:

'But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand;'—

—translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

Yet Pickthall has rendered this verse as:

'As for those from whom ye fear rebellion. admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them . Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! Allah is ever High Exalted Great,'

—translated by Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall.[163]

In a Shi'a version, it is unequivocally 'beat':

'As to those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High. Great.' —

—translation of M H Shebir, Ansariyan Publications Qum: Iran [164]

One or two commentators have suggested that the word does not mean beat them but suggests only verbal admonishment or separate, and 'beat' can mean 'win' in English, of course. As the Arabic word is in the imperative, it inclines towards the beater himself rather than the victim of beating, and yet Pickthall never claimed to translate the work exactly, but rather to provide an exegesis.

Translation increasingly means a view of translating, not as a technical exercise as such, but as a process that finds a way of expressing the texts in one's own voice, and thereby unavoidably including a political and ideological dimension into the writing which colours it, informs it and ultimately influences the reader to whatever purpose the translator may have.[165]

George Sale's 1734 translation of the Qur'an meant translating the Qur'an became an attempt to convert its readers away from Islam and towards Protestantism. And the biographer, Davenport reassures readers of his 'A Sketch of the Life of George Sale' in the same edition of Sale's 'The Koran', that Sale never equated Islam on a par with Christianity.[166] With the subtle use of words like 'pretext', Sale accuses the Prophet of aggrandising his power by the subterfuge of blaming it on "the treachery he had met with among the Jewish and idolatrous Arabs…"[167] Yet Prophet Muhammad made peace treaties and alliances with opposing tribes such as the Jewish tribes and the Quraish in order to spread his influence, and not to territorialise.

Sale translates paradise in Islam as a place where the residents will need ''neither to ease themselves nor even blow their noses for all superfluities will be discharged and carried off by perspiration, or a sweat as odoriferous as musk.'' Another rendition from the report of ibn Hibbaan explains: "They relieve themselves by perspiring through their skins, and its fragrance will be that of musk, and all stomachs will have become lean." Such bodily functions are mentioned in the Qu'ran, but rather paradise is a mysterious metaphor of an eternal garden where fruits and sustaining drinks will be in abundance, where rivers flow beneath cooling, shady trees, and chaste maidens are on hand to please every desire.[168]

The contention that Prophet Muhammad was somehow dubious in authenticity is challenged by W Montgomery Watt who argues that his genuineness is undoubted and that the burden of proof is on those who make such accusations to uphold them. These accusations appear on a

regular basis throughout the corpus and it is not until Montgomery Watt begins to bring rationality into the argument that a modern, even handed approach to Islam appears:

His readiness to undergo persecution for his beliefs, the high moral character of the men who believed in him and looked up to him as a leader, and the greatness of his ultimate achievement - all argue his fundamental integrity. To suppose Muhammad an impostor raises more problems that it solves. Moreover, none of the great figures of history is so poorly appreciated in the West as Muhammad.... Thus, not merely must we credit Muhammad with essential honesty and integrity of purpose, if we are to understand him at all; if we are to correct the errors we have inherited from the past, we must not forget the conclusive proof is a much stricter requirement than a show of plausibility, and in a matter such as this only to be attained with difficulty.

'A Short History of the World', by H G Wells, first published in 1920, promised to be an edited form of world history for the middle brow reader. In the Chapter headed 'Muhammad and Islam', Wells writes some critical remarks about Prophet Muhammad, describing him as a man of ''very considerable vanity, greed, cunning, self-deception and quite sincere religious passion''. Although he writes that Islam remains an ''empowering and inspirational religion'', he engages in sweeping inaccuracies about the faith. Wells's view of the Qur'an was no less contentious. For him it was ''unworthy of its alleged Divine authorship''. This led to protests against the book in August 1938 by a group of South Asian Muslims in the East End of London.[169] For a writer of his foresight and intellect, having predicted in 1930 that men would walk with giant strides on the moon,[170] it is surprising that he did not follow a similar line to Shaw, who was his superior.

With the discovery of a substance like helium, called Cavorite, the narrator of his story, 'The First Men in the Moon' - a playwright, and a zany inventor - are able to travel in a ball like capsule to the moon, where they discover ample supplies of gold. Wells, who was trained scientifically, is able to tell a convincing story of a craft landing on the moon, describing the effects of weightlessness in the cabin and of the low gravity on movement on the moon's surface. Presciently, his astronauts took great leaps of thirty or more feet. He imagines its extreme coldness and its lengthy days and nights. He describes the desolate nature of the moon's surface with its crevices and hills, its ridges and its vast craters.

However, the discovery of a form of life, the Selenites, in "their blue-lit caverns" with "their helmet faces, their gigantic and wonderful machines"[171] proves to be an imaginative leap unsubstantiated by Neil Armstrong and Buz Aldrin whose mission to be 'One small step for [a] man, one giant step for mankind' was completed by Apollo 11 on December 23, 1968. Without much velocity to take off from the moon, they succeed in leaving the thin atmosphere of its surface and returning to earth safely with their store of gold. However, the effects upon the narrator's mind from close contact with the moon did not go unnoticed by the writer: ''I tell it here simply to show how one's isolation and departure from this planet touched not only the functions and feeling of every organ of the body, but indeed also the very fabric of the mind,,,''[172]

Terrorism was not unknown as early as the end of the nineteenth century. It Is not only Muslim fundamentalists, Irish Sein Fein terrorists or home grown right wing anarchists and Chechen rebels who bomb and maim innocent civilians and bystanders. In Joseph Conrad's 'The Secret Agent' Russian terrorism was being kept under control by the police department of the 1900s. Mr Verloc, married to Winnie, and an innocent seeming 'Private' shopkeeper is in league with an undisclosed foreign embassy which, from hints given and names supplied in the text – Mr Vladimir and "Comrade Alexander Ossipon, special delegate of the more or less mysterious Red Committee" – could only have been that of Russia. Meeting them clandestinely, he arranges for a bomb plot to be carried out at the Greenwich Observatory – the very centre of the Western hemisphere. The embassy man confirms what action is required: ''what is desired," said the man of papers, "is the occurrence of something definite which should stimulate their vigilance.'"

When one of the anarchists is attempting to blow up the Observatory and knock the bourgeoisie over, Ossipon is speculating with Vladimir about what human beings want. Then he leans back in his chair, and one cannot see him because of the light, but he announces, "Mankind does not know what it wants." This confusion about wants is essential to Conrad's outlook on life.

The real reasons for their anarchic activities are a dislike and a distrust of capitalism, as Vladimir's intentions are explained: "He saw Capitalism doomed in its cradle, born with the poison of the principle of competition in its system. The great capitalists devouring the little capitalists, concentrating the power and the tools of production in great masses, perfecting industrial processes."[173] It is only through the activities of the vigilant police department, the precursor of today's Scotland Yard, that the anarchists' activities are brought to light, and the bomb which claims the life of an unfortunate dupe who is given the task of carrying it to the Observatory in Greenwich Park, is discovered. But when Verloc is dumped by his Russian masters, because of the failure of the plot, revenge is his only ambition before he serves his two year prison sentence for the crime. This is forestalled by his murder by Winnie who makes off with Ossipon, only to be cheated out of Verloc's money, and to be deserted by the Russian spy who jumps from a moving train. The story ends in her suicide by flinging herself from the cross-channel ferry, providing a classic Conradian mystery of intrigue, anarchy and murder.

Orientalism remains a deep seated and pervasive element in the corpus. From Byron's interest in the Orient and his resultant pseudo-orientalism to E M Forster's rites of passage novel, 'A Passage to India',[174] there is an obsession with the mysterious East and also a taint of racism. In Forster's novel, Mrs Alice Quested's rejection of, and supposed sexual abuse by Dr Aziz, and his subsequent remission from guilt by her own inability to make a sworn statement in court, and the English community in India's continued belief, despite the exoneration by the court, in Alice's rather than Dr Aziz's innocence, could be seen as little less than class and race intolerance spawned by a century or more of misunderstanding, hatred and mutual suspicion.

After centuries of disabuse and disparagement, it is refreshing to find that authors could rank Prophet Muhammad in the very top position as statesman and leader. Many Muslims would argue that Prophet Muhammad held that position indubitably in their hearts and minds, and the faithful, believers and those whose faith was slight, had nevertheless always ranked their spiritual leader in the top position of all. It was the ''combination of secular and religious''

import that persuaded Michael Hart in his book listing the top one hundred influential leaders to choose Muhammad as the number one in ranking:[175]

My choice of Muhammad to lead the list of the world's most influential persons may surprise some readers and may be questioned by others, but he was the only man in history who was supremely successful on both the secular and religious level. ...It is probable that the relative influence of Muhammad on Islam has been larger than the combined influence of Jesus Christ and St. Paul on Christianity. ...It is this unparalleled combination of secular and religious influence which I feel entitles Muhammad to be considered the most inf luential single figure in human history.

I now take a look at modern representations of Muslims in the diaspora and try to relate Muslim issues in these novels to the believers in the 'Ummah'. Set in Kabul and San Francisco, 'The Kite Runner' by Khaled Hosseini[176] recounts the story of Amir, a boy of twelve years, and his friend, Hassan, both of whose passion is climbing tress and flying kites, like most boys of that age. The novel gives us an insight into the history of the Pushtun and the Hazara people of Afghanistan. After the fall of the monarchy, life in Kabul continues at its own pace with the economic reforms of the Kamal era, and the boys carry on with their glorious, vibrant, soaring and diving, twisting and turning kite flying. It explores the guilt and pain of parenthood, while Amir's father is forced to flee with his family to America upon the invasion of the Russians. Once in the United States, Amir spends a lot of time at a local car boot sale where he meets and then later marries Soraya in an Islamic ceremony. By 1992 to 1996 the Northern Alliance had overtaken Kabul and Amir travels to Pakistan to get a clearer picture of what is happening at home. ''When the Taliban rolled in and kicked the Alliance out of Kabul, I actually danced on that street'' his character, Rahim Khan says. Amir affects a reunion with his childhood friend, Hassan who had removed to Hazarajat. They travel together by car to Kabul to take up life there again. Hassan is joined by his mother after a long search for him, and dies four years later; Amir seeks redemption, the only thing he cannot find after a life's search.

The novelist has been criticised for portraying the Taliban as evil,[177] citing for example, Assef as a rapist, Nazim's drug taking and sadism, and the portrait of him as an executioner.[178] To seek to make a connection between the authorial voice and his characters is often difficult, even though it is often made. A moving and bewildering story of Muslim life, it engages with the intricacies of Afghan family life and never relaxes its emotional grip on the reader.

Monica Ali's novel 'Brick Lane' was published in 2003 and it achieved immediate literary success as a seemingly representative novel of the Bangladeshi community resident in Whitechapel, London, that opens up ways to discuss a new, if problematic, inclusion of Bangladeshi women in the international world. On the publication of the novel, the Greater Sylhet Development and Welfare Council wrote an 18 page letter to Monica Ali protesting against its portrayal of their community. In 2006, filming of the novel on Brick Lane itself caused further disturbances: about 100 protesters marched through the streets, and the film crew eventually pulled out to produce the final scenes of the film in another location. Being excluded from the discussions around a novel, that is to all intents and purposes engaged with

their culture and their background, was for them provocative. While there is a great deal of literary merit in Monica Ali's account of Nazneen, trapped in a forced marriage and her lover, Karim, a fiery Muslim who wants to radicalise the local community, the plot entails promiscuity, so it was not likely to appeal to the deeply conservative Bangladeshi community.

'In the Kitchen', Monica Ali's next novel, is set among immigrant workers in a hotel restaurant. It features the basement kitchen in central London, where Gabriel Lightfoot, the main character, is the executive chef, and a former mill town in Yorkshire, where Gabriel's dying father, Ted, had worked all his life.[179] Ted has strong views on everything – what it means to be British - he suggests in a discussion with a New Labour politician, one of the backers of the restaurant project, that Britishness has itself been commoditised. The Labour politician remarks, "We talk about the multicultural model, but it's really nothing more than *laissez-faire*. Britishness is or has become essentially about a neutral, value-free identity.'' On economics and the balance of payments, Ted rants

When we were the workshop of the world we sold to everywhere and we'd a healthy surplus, you see. But we've a huge deficit now because all as we can do is shop. We're not a trading nation, we're a nation of consumers, that's all. [180]

Gabriel is dissatisfied with his progress in life, dislikes change, and wants a return to former values. His greatest dislike is of immigrants, and he mistreats his restaurant workers out of envy of what they have and he does not – a value system and social cohesion.[181] Monica Ali's work is emotionally riveting. She is prescient about numerous issues in British society such as the economic downturn and is scrupulous in her recording of the immigrant experience.

In Hanif Kureshi maturation story, 'Buddha of Suburbia', set in the unfashionable locales of south London, the complex relationship of what it means to be a Muslim in nineteen seventies Britain is portrayed. A detailed and well manicured description of a society in transition during periods of economic, artistic and social upheaval through a troop of characters that symbolise the various factions of a disintegrating society, while maintaining their integrity as fully developed and sympathetic individuals, is painted.[182]

It is set in the 1970s, when the fact that the protagonist, Karim, has an English mother and an Indian father means that he is continually asked where he is from, as if his very existence required some kind of explanation. He is neither English enough for some, nor Indian enough for others. Haroon, his father's escape from this disaster is to become the "Buddha of Suburbia", mouthing commonplace Indian spiritual scripts for desperate middle aged suburban housewives.

Karim's mixed race background provides interesting information about English society. A 21 year-old Englishman of Indian origin is at a critical junction in his life. He is impatient for something to happen, but, uncertain as to what that is exactly, According to one critic, he lolls around,

"just sort of hanging out, going from place to place. This gives the book a kind of wandering and aimless feel."[183]

Kureishi uses the story of the two lovers to create a patchwork of eighties England which joins together some of its most different groups: black people and white people, the thrusting, entrepreneurial middle class and the industrial class, the former racist and the immigrant. When Karim sets out to join the theatre it brings him a much needed introduction into a glamorous, thrilling, world of romance and show business. This exhausted, he moves on to New York for the next ten months, and then returns to a small bit part in a soap opera. He meets Terry, a Welshman and a communist, and Eva, who is an upper middle class girl who feigns working class roots.

One of the chief reasons for the book's popularity is the way in which star-crossed lovers from different nations—usually an imperial nation and its colony—marry, soothing the conflict between their two communities. This narrative form found new attention in queer postcolonial fiction in the late twentieth century.

'My Beautiful Launderette' also by Hanif Kureshi, introduces three important themes concerned with minorities i.e. racism, homophobia and sexuality. Kureishi combines them into a single and attractive plot. 'My Beautiful Launderette', although containing subtlely disguised autobiographical references to his own family, remains ''one of the most remarkable global, cross-cultural love stories in contemporary literature'', according to another critic.

The characters in Zadie Smith's 'White Teeth' are Samad Miah Iqbal, a Bengali Muslim who has contracted into an arranged marriage with Alsana Begum – and their cousin Ardashi, their friend from war service, the Englishman, Alfred Archibald |ones, aged 47 just divorced from Ophelia, and remarried to Clara, a Jehovah's Witness from Jamaica, aged 19. Zadie Smith examines the large age differences in the marriages between the couples. Samad is Alsana's cousin, who is six years older than she, Archie was already 28 when Clara was born; and she looks at the relationships between the respective female partners, ''They have resigned themselves to their husbands' mutual appreciation society.''[184] Samad and Alsana's marriage results in twin boys, Magid and Millat, while Archie and Clara get Irie, ''with her wilful Afro (not a pretty child: she had got her genes mixed up, Archie's nose, and Clara's awful buck teeth)''. Samad embarks on a relationship with their schoolteacher, and before long ''Samad kicked the stool from under him like a man hanging himself, and met the loquacious lips of Poppy Burt-Jones with his own feverish pair.''[185] The relationship does not last due to pressures of culture, religion and from friends and family, not despite a very angry reaction from Poppy Burt-Jones. This happens at the same time as Samad's son, Magid is abducted to Pakistan and leads to Iqbal's satisfaction that he is doing the right thing by the elder of the twin sons, whilst Millat, the younger son ''didn't need to go back home: he stood schizophrenic, one foot in Bengal and one in Willesden.''[186]

Set against a backdrop of the war and 1970s London, it is a story of racial isolation, of the inconsistencies of existence between Bengal and London: ''What am I going to do, after this war is over? … Go back to Bengal? Or to Delhi? Who would have such an Englishman there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?''[187] Samad, now working in a restaurant, has to take the cricket test devised by Norman Tebbit: ''Which side do they cheer for? Are you still looking back to where you came from or where you are?'[188]' And later,

Samad is asked, ‘’’And who … can pull the West out of ‘em once it’s in?’’’[189] Also, ‘’Because immigrants have always been particularly prone to repetition – jt’s something to do with that experience of moving from West to East or from East to West or from island to island. Even when you arrive, you’re still going back and forth; your children are going round and round. There’s no proper term for it - *original sin* seems too harsh; maybe *original trauma* would be better’’,[190] the narrator remarks.

The novel’s indeterminacy and its cultural homogeneity are what makes it a surprisingly fresh look not only at Muslim identity, but at the cosmopolitan nature of modern northwest London with its multiplicity of languages; slangs, argots; faiths; Jehovah’s Witnesses, Protestants and Muslims; colours; jasmine and purple, sights, culinary smells and tastes, and sounds, and its amazing, vibrant, yet often flawed characters.[191]

The academic, Sir Monty Kipps in Zadie Smith’s ‘On Beauty’ is a West Indian immigrant in Britain living with his wife, Carlene and children, Victoria and Michael. Monty interacts with Professor Howard Belsey , a white Englishman who has an African-American wife Kiki, and their children Jerome, Levi and Zora. They reside in the university town of Wellington, outside Boston, Mass. Their son, Jerome, goes to England as an intern with the fundamentalist Christian Kipps family. Jerome is a ‘’born-again’’ Christian but is rejected by one he describes in an email message as ‘’the amazing, gorgeous, brilliant’’ Victoria[192] in a romantic episode that proved to be ‘’a storm in a teacup’’.[193] Professor Howard travels over to Kilburn in London to try to untangle the relationship between his son and Sir Monty’s daughter and return him to Boston.

Sometime later Monty Kipps and family go to Wellington, where Monty lectures at the university. Kiki becomes unfaithfully close to Clare, vis- a -vis Howard, who himself has been errant, but Dr Belsey and Monty Kipps are increasingly estranged due to issues around academic values of freedom and liberality, between ‘’Howard the radical art theorist’’ and ‘’Monty the cultural conservative’’.[194] The novel helps to elucidate ideas about ethnic, cultural and Muslim-Christian interfaces particularly in an upper-middle class setting in academia in Britain and America. In examining tutor-pupil relationships, parenting and childhood, it adds to an elemental understanding of human life and experience.

In ‘The Road from Damascus’, the Muslim novelist and fantasist, Robin Yassin-Kassad declares that being Arab is the Number One love of his Syrian protagonist, Sami, poetry his second.[195] In Syria, as a dissident student, he falls in love with the beautiful, Muntaha. Sami goes astray in London soon after following a hedonistic streak with alcohol and cannabis, in what Yassin-Kassad calls ‘the theatre of everyday living’. During a meeting of the thinly disguised Salman Rushdie - Rashid Iqbal, he gets into trouble, and is arrested shortly after the events of 9/11. The novel continues to depict a conflict between secular and religious identities and results, however, in Sami joining his wife, Muntaha in reconciliation and prayer.

These novels, from Monica Ali to Robin Yassin-Kassad, demonstrate the alienation and point to the diaspora of Muslims and Muslimas in Britain, and reveal the continual tension that modern day Muslims feel between the secular and the spiritual aspects of their lives, particularly in a time of great tension between the ‘’war on terror’’ and the drift to extremism in some part of the ‘Ummah’ i.e. the faithful in the community. But as Zadie Smith says: ‘’‘What you never understand is that people are ‘*extreme*.’’’[196]

What certain sections of the community are now calling for is for parents, teachers, and preachers to extol the peace loving and benign nature of the Islamistas. Not that government is not proactive in this struggle, but the realisation must arise both in the community and in politics, that there is no cause without effect, no effect without cause – the cause being for the Islamic community in Britain foreign policy matters from Kashmir to Yemen, from Afghanistan to Iraq.

So how does this literature help us to understand the interface between Islam and people in Britain, it might be asked. The issues that are continually raised reflect the trends and views of society at that period such as racism against Asian, minority, ethnic, and black groups; anti-Muslim phobias; hatred of immigration and immigrants; economic downturns such as in 2008 seen to have been caused by what the 'Daily Mail' terms ''hordes'' of European and other immigrants;[197] former colonial powers reduced to penury; homophobic attacks, sexism and so on. Bernard Shaw and Michael Hart's glowing praise of Prophet Muhammad is a case in point, and so to a lesser extent are themes from Monica Ali, Robin Yassin-Kassad and others that reconcile Muslim – Christian differences and return characters back to the Islamic fold, prayer and submission to God's will.

Chapter 5

In order to understand the interface between English Literature and Islam it is necessary to know something of the basics of the beliefs of the religion to try to achieve a realisation of why there were so many misunderstandings and 'mysterious irrationalities' in the relationship. Islam is a religion of toleration, peace and understanding, much maligned in the present day. It is a faith based on three pillars - *La Illahah Il Allah* – the monotheistic, arguably tautological, creed that there is no God but God. Secondly, *Mohammadan Rasul Ullah* the fact that Muhammad is the messenger of God, and thirdly the belief expressed in *Malik Yaaum al-Deen* [Master of the Day of Judgment] that there will be a judgment day when all souls will be tested by Allah and found to be qualified and able to enter Paradise or not.[198] Without these three protestations of faith, it is not possible to claim that one is a Muslim and that he/she believes in Islam.

The monotheistic basis of the religion is rooted in the divine inspiration that was given to the prophet Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel. Prophets do not intercede directly with God but receive their revelations from the spirit world via angels. The concept takes its authority from the Qur'an where it states: "Say: He is God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him."[199] It is essential to understand that God does not beget anyone, thus explaining the difficulty with the Christian concept of ''the only son of God''. In the sense that we are all the sons [and daughters] of God, this is feasible, but to suggest that God begets a son directly from his oneness is anathema.

It is axiomatic that Muhammad is the messenger of God, as it is he who revealed the holy Qur'an to his followers and to the world. The first of the devotees of this message was his uncle, Abu Talib.[200] As Prophet Muhammad was forty years old on the occasion of the revelations, it was clear that a successor would need to be chosen and the choice, according to the Shi'a tradition, fell to Abu Talib's son Ali Ibn abu Talib, and to Abu Bakr, following the Sunni sect. There remains a difference, particularly amongst the Wahabbis, and not found in other traditions, whereby the Messenger of God is not supposed to be venerated nor have his tomb designated as a shrine because he is regarded as a human being who lived, died, and had a family and descendents in this world.

On *Yaaum al-Deen*, judgment day, there will be a last day upon which everybody will be examined by Allah and a decision will be made as to whether the soul may reach Paradise or not. Paradise is reputed to be a place where there will be gardens with rivers flowing beneath and every luxury will be on hand for your delectation and delight. There are a hundred levels of paradise, so the soul will qualify according to the actions on earth which enabled him or her to reach a higher level. On the other hand, Hell is a place where the soul will be

condemned to perdition. One will be given boiling liquids to drink and the fires of hell will rage incessantly. It is reported by at-Tirmithi and al-Hakim that the Prophet said to Angel Gabriel:'

Return to it and look at what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants. The Prophet (pbuh) said: So he returned to it and found that it was encompassed by forms of hardship. Then he returned to Him and said: By Your glory, I fear that no one will enter it. He said: Go to Hell-fire and look at it and what I have prepared therein for its inhabitants, and he found that it was in layers, one above the other. Then he returned to Him and said: By Your glory, no one who hears of it will enter it. So He ordered that it be encompassed by lusts. Then He said: Return to it. And he returned to it and said: By Your glory, I am frightened that no one will escape from entering it.'[201]

In the five pillars of Islam there are, additionally, other proscriptions that require the payment of the welfare due or 'poor rate' - a contribution of two and a half percent of one's wealth; fasting which takes place during the month of Ramadan; and the pilgrimage to Mecca known as the 'hajj' during the month of al Hajj, [202]

Zakat, the welfare due or 'poor rate' is a payment that is required from all Muslims payable in the month of Ramadan. It includes any properties, land, gold, silver and jewellery that one possesses from which total a calculation must be made to define the required two and a half percent tax that is enjoined on all Muslims to help the poor and needy, particularly during the month of fasting. '*Zakat*' is referred to thirty times in the Qur'an. However, it is also often termed the forgotten pillar of Islam, especially in Western Europe, where there has been a growing disconnect between the community of believers and the practical manifestations of a beautiful, spiritual institution.

Saum, which is the rule of fasting, requires the adherents to refrain from eating, drinking and sex between sunrise and sunset. It is observed during the month of Ramadan and expects adults from around age fourteen or puberty to observe a limited fast of about twelve hours depending on their location. In northern hemispheres this might increase to as much as twenty-three hours, in which case many jurists have decreed that the fasting believer should revert to the hours of sunrise to sunset at the capital city of the Muslims –Mecca, Saudi Arabia. What would happen in the case of a Muslim astronaut in space, it may be asked. In such circumstances, the astronaut would be advised to follow the time derived from timetables based on the latitude and longitude of Mecca. Fasting is not expected to be unduly onerous on the fasting person and allows exceptions for the elderly, the infirm and children, nursing mothers, those women who are in their menses and those who are ritually unable to qualify for such activity, meaning someone who is ritually unclean, or perhaps mentally or physically incapable or in special needs.

The pilgrimage, or *Hajj* is a traditional bulwark of Islam. It was enjoined on the Muslims by Prophet Muhammad, who encouraged believers to make a journey from the place where they reside to the holy Kabbbah in the city of Makkah al Makaramah at least once during their lifetime. The hajj is the largest single gathering of human beings on the face of the planet, numbering many millions. The major pilgrimage, or *hajj amatul* must take place between the

8th to 12thof Dhu al-Hijjah, the twelfth and final month of the Islamic calendar, whilst the minor pilgrimage or *hajj umrah* can be undertaken at any time. Because the Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar, the year is eleven days shorter than the western calendar and hence moves forward by that amount each year. The pilgrim has to be dressed in seamless garments of cotton cloth, whilst for women covering the face at the scene of the Qibla is prohibited. The rituals of the Hajj include circumambulating seven times around the Kaaba, touching or kissing the meteoric stone, running seven times between Mounts Safa and Marwah to emulate the search for water for the baby Ishmael by his mother, Hagar, and finally stoning the Devil in Mina which is the symbolic act of remitting one's sins by throwing stones at a pillar set up to represent Satan. Performance of the hajj often means that the pilgrim is feted in his or her community on return and gives rise to much celebrating and feasting.

Essentially, Islam considers the Bible and the Jewish Torah, the first part of the Jewish bible, to be formerly true revelations that did once agree with the Qur'an, but were rewritten over time. Many of the Bible stories about Solomon, Noah, Moses, etc are also in the Islamic tradition. An important story is that of Abraham and Ishmael. The Bible recounts that Abraham's son, Ishmael, was by the handmaid, Hagar, and Isaac was begat by Sarah much later when Abraham was old. Isaac, as the favored son, became the father of the tribe of the Hebrews, while Ishmael established the Ishmaelites.[203]

According to the Qur'an, Solomon was a king of the land of Israel and the son of David. The Qur'an regards Solomon as a prophet and a divinely-appointed monarch. Solomon was the third king of Israel and, according to tradition, was a wise and just ruler of his country. He was one of the elect of God, and was given many gifts by Allah, including the ability to converse with the animals.

Noah was a prophet of Islam who evaded the flood that enveloped the known world at that time by building an ark made of wood and nails. He took on board animals, birds and insects and they survived the flooding of the earth despite Noah losing his son who remained and would not come aboard, and so was drowned with the infidels. When the water stopped pouring out from all the fissures in the earth and from the sky, calm returned and the sun shone once more. The earth absorbed the water and the ark landed on Mount Judi, which is believed to be in what is now Turkey.

Moses is regarded as a prophet from Egypt who was found in the reeds alongside the river Nile. His mother, Jochebed, had hidden him in the reeds when the Pharaoh ordered all newly born Hebrew males to be killed. The child was found in a woven reed basket, or an 'ark' according to the Qur'an, by the Pharaoh's wife Asiya, not his daughter as in the bible. She convinced Pharaoh to keep him as their son because they did not have any children. Moses persuaded the Israelites to enter Canaan, but they were not willing to fight the Canaanites, fearing that they would be defeated. Moses replied by begging Allah that he and his brother, Aaron, would be separated from the Israelites. Following the Islamic tradition, Moses is interred at Maqam El Nabi Musa in Jericho.

A study of literature in any language is close to Muslim men and women, as well as discussion and conferences where people gather to debate upon cultural, literary, religious and other issues. Islam includes the secular as well as the religious, and therefore a Muslim's liberal collection of books could and did include works on any subject. Throughout the Islamic world book purchasing took place and private and public (free) libraries were established and flourished, particularly in Muslim Spain; the famous libraries of Ibn-e-Umaid

in Muscat and Ali bin-e Yahya bin-e- Munajjim in Qafs, Baghdad[204] and school and public libraries with sections on Islamic jurisprudence (*Figh*) Medicine, Astronomy, physical and natural sciences, arts and literature were set up everywhere in Muslimdom.

The perennial question in the literature remained ‘’Was Islam spread by the sword?’’ W Montgomery Watt provided the best argument against this notion where he pointed to the number of countries in which Christian and other religions remained in good numbers for centuries after the conquest. He argued that they would surely have been eliminated if it were the case that Islam was only spread by a violent form of jihad. For the first few centuries the majority of the people of those areas retained their Christianity, but slowly they began to convert to Islam, particularly in Andalusia. In Egypt the Coptic Christians remained, and until this day represent a substantial proportion of the population as well as Christians in the North African littoral and Syria, Jordan and in Lebanon, where the existing Christian minority survived against the Druzes, who were in the majority in that country. The argument that Islam penetrated many countries through trading routes is a persuasive one. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population and yet there had never been an invading army to impose Islam on either Indonesia or Malaysia. Truth, logic, justice, and reason were the best components of a religion that was spread intellectually, and as Thomas Carlyle maintained, one first had to get his sword, and where would one get his sword, one was alone in a minority of one before he could start propounding a religion, so to take up the sword would be little use for him.[205]

In the history of world literature, Islam was seen as monotheistic, Christianity was perceived by many as polytheistic (the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost). Where Christians were regarded as monogamous, Muslims were portrayed as polygamous zealots whose carnal desires knew no bounds.[206] However, in the First World War, tens of millions of European and American young men lost their lives leaving behind millions of widowed and single women. These women were unable to remarry or find spouses, since there remained literally no men left to marry. Such women were forced into factory, shop and other work in order to survive. After the battles of Badr and Uhud, Muhammad decided that in a period of emergency such as the aftermath of a war, polygamy would be tolerated, thus allowing for the need for food, shelter and sexual gratification.[207]

The position of Muslim women has continued to bedevil the narrative propelled by opponents of Islam. Women have equal rights in Islam according to a close reading of the Qur’an. Muslim women do pray alongside of men, and they continue on equal footing with them in all areas – spiritual, social, economic, political, legal and matrimonial.[208] Women fought alongside the Prophet in early Islam and the Prophet’s wives hold the highest status in Islam among all. Women are endowed with property rights clearly established in Islamic law: as the Qur’an enjoins: "Whatever men earn, they have a share of that and whatever women earn, they have a share in that."[209]

The Qur’an grants the right to own property and wealth and to maintain that in the woman’s name after marriage; the right to vote; and the right to divorce. As Prophet Muhammad decreed:

the most perfect believers are the best in conduct and best of you are those who are best to their wives." "Treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers. [210]

The position of women and the issue of their rights are safeguarded in Islamic law. The inheritance laws allow for widowed spouses to receive a share of their deceased husband's property, depending on the number of other brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren, cousins and aunts left living. If there is only one daughter or granddaughter (and no other inheriting person) the share for them is calculated as one half, and if there are two or more daughters or granddaughters their share is two thirds. And the Qur'an also details clearly and unambiguously the permitted share of a widower:

And for you there is one-half of what your wives leave behind if there is no child, but if they leave a child then for you there is one-fourth of what they leave behind. [211]

It is a complicated system that allows for the inheritance to be divided equitably among families, with a preference given to male inheritors preserving the male estate and line. A female person who inherits thus, benefits from these laws applying to her family by marriage, by which she will also gain an advantage.

Women dress Islamically by choice, while some do not. The 'Burqa' is a full covering favoured by Afghanis under the Taliban. It is claimed as a legitimate, if somewhat overstated, cultural artefact, but by demonising the 'Burqa' opponents show to the world a lack of tolerance, a gap in humanity, and also a void in their empathetic qualities. The M.P., Philip Hollobone, a representative of the 'people', has declared that he will not interview female constituents wearing the burqa. Yet he would have no objection, it is supposed, to meeting a nudist, a lifeguard or a streaker. The burqa is a garment designed to provide modesty, chastity (can I use this word in a post modern, liberalist setting?) and individual privacy. And yet the above wearers of a kind of uniform wear it without hindrance. Nowhere in the Qur'an does it instruct women to cover their faces, only requesting them to attire themselves modestly. As the Qur'an advises: ''And say to the believing women/That they should lower/Their gaze and guard/Their modesty; that they/Should not display their/Beauty and ornaments except/What (must ordinarily) appear/Thereof. [212]

There has been recent progress on women's family rights in Britain. New social contracts in line with Sharia law mean that, for the first time in a hundred years, a married Muslim couple will now have equal rights. According to a marriage contract sanctioned by leading Islamic non-governmental agencies, [213] a husband will have to waive his right to polygamy, that is normally allowed under Islamic law, in a new contract which has been described as "revolutionary" by certain commentators. It lays out the rights and responsibilities of the husband and wife in Islamic marriage, and emphasises the Qur'anic ideal of marriage as a relationship of mutual love, toleration and kindness. Circumcision of male infants remains a traditional Muslim practice; however there are human rights issues around a subject that has always been controversial, and questions have been raised about its effectiveness in

preventing disease. Washing of the private parts of the body is also traditional in Islamic societies, and this leads to the contravention against using the left hand for eating. As the Qur'an endorses in the verse: "Therein are men who love to cleanse themselves;/and Allah loves those who cleanse themselves."[214]

It is unfortunate that a tribal Pakistani culture invades British Muslim thought today. Some mosques have been dominated by a rural backwoods cohort that would attempt to drag British Muslims back to the Dark Ages where a profoundly obscure, patriarchal, anti liberal, anti gender, narrative prevails. Insistence on obscurantist, isolationist and backward-looking ideas that have no relevance to the modern world has brought the present day 'Ummah' (the Islamic body) into a severe cultural conflict with the rest of Britain in terms of women's rights, forced marriages and financial security for women. There needs to be recognition of changes in the Muslim world, including women's greater public roles in law and commerce, educational achievements, and financial success and this is slowly beginning to happen through bodies such as the Muslim Institute.[215] Muslims in Britain are isolated in a mainstream culture, and the only hope for success is by transforming ourselves from inside the Muslim fold. We need to change attitudes towards women, democracy, justice, marriage, dress codes, religious observances, and much more, before we can become outgoing, less introverted and introspective people with a chip on our shoulder and believe that we can make British Islam a dynamic, innovative and progresssive culture to show to the world.

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