



Islam, Citizenship And Education:
Building Akhlaq, Adhab And Tahdhib

WHEN HOPE AND HISTORY RHYME

A Discussion Paper:
Maurice Irfan Coles



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ISLAM, CITIZENSHIP AND EDUCATION:

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A brief note about the author:

Maurice Irfan Coles converted to Islam just before the millennium. He is an educationalist of some 40 years standing and has held positions in teaching and education management, and as an adviser and inspector. He has, over time, specialised in issues of faith and race equality, school improvement and curriculum development. He is the Director of the Islam and Citizenship Education Project (ICE) and, most recently, the first Chief Executive of Curriculum Enrichment for the Common Era (CE4CE), a company dedicated to enhancing curriculum provision through world heritages generally, and through 1001 Inventions in particular. He is the author of numerous educational articles, a contributor to a range of books and author of *Every Muslim Child Matters* (Trentham 2008). The companion volume for parents, *Every Muslim Parent Matters*, will be published by Kube Publications in Spring 2010.

1. PREFACE

These are times that trouble the soul of the *ummah*, the worldwide community of over 1.5 billion Muslims who are united in their love and surrender to Allah, in their overarching daily practices and in their core beliefs. 'For they love Him and He loves them.' (Qur'an5.54). The debate about citizenship and western-style democracies, and their relation to Islam and the Muslim world is not new, but has been focused predominantly on states with Muslim majorities in a post-colonial age. Much of the rhetoric has been influenced by the need to forge distinct national and religious identities, whilst trying to remain true to Islamic ideals. The discourse about what it means to be a Muslim in a state where Muslims are in a minority is, however, relatively new. The issues for the millions of Muslim citizens living in the west, or living in democracies where they form a minority, are real and current because they go to the very heart of questions of faith, of identity, of gender roles and of citizenship. The debate already had a sharp edge with some non-Muslims arguing that Islam was in essence undemocratic and that there was likely to be a 'clash of civilisations', reinforced by a tiny minority of Muslims who believe that democracy and Islam are incompatible and that the only true Islam is one in which the Caliph rules in an Islamic state. For the latter minority, engagement with the democratic process is *haram*, is forbidden.

The seminal 9/11 in the US, 7/7 in the UK and other acts of terror and extremism throughout the world turned that sharp edge into a lethal weapon which made the debate about democracy and Islam urgent and relevant to every Muslim, almost regardless of age, living in a democratic society. Many of the two million Muslims living in the UK found themselves, almost overnight, the new 'enemy within', not to be trusted by the rest of the population, especially if they wore any form of 'traditional' dress, sported a dark beard or chose to wear a headscarf or a veil. British-born Muslim children wondered why so many people appeared to hate them and call them 'terrorist' in the playground or street. Overlay this with issues that surround Islamic responses to the gaping wound of the Israel/Palestine conflict, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and continued disturbance in Kashmir and India and you have a troubled cocktail of confusing issues for Muslims, especially the young. They seek guidance and support to help them navigate these contemporary raging waters. Is it any wonder that the soul of the *ummah* is so troubled, for what do you do, and to whom do you turn for guidance?

We are fortunate in that there are a number of imams and scholars trained in both the western and Islamic traditions whose insights have helped unpick these complexities. We are fortunate also in that, within the Muslim communities in the UK, we have men and women of wisdom, drive and commitment who will engage openly in discourse, many of whom are taking action to address these difficult issues head-on. Although this discussion paper is personal, it has not been written in a vacuum. I owe a great debt to the work of Professor Tariq Ramadan who has helped sharpen my thinking, increased my knowledge of Islam and *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence), and of the Prophet's (PBUH) deep spirituality. Prof. Ramadan has provided me with a scholarly platform that adds depth and breadth to these arguments. In addition, prior to publication, this paper has been widely circulated to a range of *ulama* who have kindly praised its content and style and I thank them for allowing me the space to present and to discuss my thoughts. I am also indebted to Sajid Hussain and the Bradford Council of Mosques whose pioneering work on Islam and citizenship in the **Nasiha project** in their city (www.nasiha.com) helped set the context and continues to inform thinking. Similarly, the inspirational work of Rauf Bashir and Irfan Chisti in the Building Bridges Project in Pendle has supported significantly our educational thinking and lesson preparation (www.buildingbridges.com). I must also pay tribute to Iman Monawar Hussain, whose Oxford Muslim Pupils' Empowerment Programme; 'towards a counter narrative', offers an excellent scriptural analysis of many of the most contentious Islamic issues. (http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/13111/Toolkit-OMPEP-June%202009.pdf).

Above all, however, I pay tribute to all those involved in ***The Islam and Citizenship Project (ICE, www.theiceproject.com)*** a British government funded initiative which has led to a unique collaboration between members of the diverse Muslim communities, both Shia and Sunni, in England. ICE has involved Imams, sheikhs and scholars, government officers, teachers, pupils and parents from some 30 madrassahs in six areas across the country. ICE has devised, trialled and produced 50 citizenship lessons to be taught in madrassahs with pupils aged 9-14. Every stage, every lesson, every word has been planned collaboratively and closely; and then validated by a wide range of Muslim *ulama*. I have written this discussion paper primarily to help support the thinking and the teaching of those madrassah staff who give up so much of their time to support young Muslims, but I hope also, inshallah, that it can be accessed by a wider non Muslim audience, especially now that the ICE project has been expanded to include teachers in the independent Muslim schools' sector and teachers in mainstream schools. I am a recent convert ('revert') to Islam and have no formal Islamic training so all mistakes found in this document are entirely my responsibility. Allah has however doubly blessed me in that, in the last few years, He has provided me with the opportunity to bring together my 40 years of English educational experience with my Islamic religion and way of life, my *deen*. In keeping with the traditions and spirit of Islam, and in all humility, all praise must go to God who started me on this journey and to whom everything is owed.

2. WHY IS IT CALLED A DISCUSSION PAPER AND WHO IS IT FOR?

This is called a discussion paper because it aims to stimulate the debate about the relationship between democracy and the essential values of Islam. It is a discussion paper because so much remains to be said and written. I am acutely conscious that sections of this brief article deserve a book to themselves, and I know as I produce subsequent editions there will be added insights and challenges. It seems that almost every day there are new perspectives and interpretations by both Muslims and non-Muslims which sharpen the debate further. Thus, since my presentation of the first draft of this paper to the Contextualising Islam Project (<http://www.cis.cam.ac.uk/CIBP.html>) in March 2009, a major new work by Professor John Keane has appeared which fundamentally challenges what he calls, the ‘myth’ and the ‘dogma’ that democracy was born in Greece. He argues in some detail that the concept of democracy was both kept alive and enhanced by Islamic thought and practices. (*The Life and Death of Democracy*, John Keane, Simon and Schuster, 2009.)

This paper forms part of a much wider debate about Islam in our contemporary world. It is the product of extensive research and fits well within our other publications, in particular *Every Muslim Child Matters* (Trentham 2008), *Every Muslim Parent Matters* (to be published by the Markfield Institute, Spring 2010); and *Faith, Interfaith and Cohesion* (ed. Coles), the Institute of Community Cohesion (2005). It also resonates with the wonderful work that is underway concerning the re-examination of the Muslim legacy in our modern world (www.muslimheritage.com); and in particular to the groundbreaking book and subsequent work of 1001 Inventions Muslim Heritage in Our World (www.1001inventions.com) orchestrated by the Foundation of Science Civilisation and Technology.

Aimed primarily at teachers in madrasahs and other Islamic institutions, this paper will be of value to teachers in mainstream schools as well, especially citizenship teachers in schools with large numbers of Muslim students. It might also be helpful to Muslim parents and to pupils/students aged 14 and over. It may well be of some use to all those involved in issues related to Islam in our modern world.

This is, in the first instance, **a discussion paper aimed to stimulate dialogue**. Reading the executive summary will give you a good idea of the main arguments. As this discussion paper is available both electronically and in hard copy, we have hyperlinked to other sites and documents wherever possible so that should you be so minded, you can look at other source material. If you are interested in the teaching aspects, appendix two lists the ICE lessons available on-line at both upper Key Stage 2 (9-11 years olds), and Key Stage 3 (11-14 year olds). Similarly, if you are interested in teaching citizenship from an Islamic perspective in youth settings, then I recommend you to look at Young Muslim and Citizen, the excellent product of a large project from UK Race and Europe Network (youngmuslimcitizens.org.uk/download.html).

This discussion paper covers some of the most contentious Islamic issues in contemporary Britain. In my view as a practising Muslim and with Allah's guidance we must not shirk these issues. Comments, criticisms and challenges are, therefore, positively invited and welcomed. I am more than happy to engage in debate and would value constructive comment and criticism. In particular I seek comments on the following areas:

- Is it scripturally accurate?
- Do the Qur'anic and prophetic passages reinforce the points I am trying to make?
- Are there any other scriptural references that make the point better?
If so, please let me have them.
- Have I missed any points that you think I should have included?
If so, please provide me with the details.

Please contact me via the ICE project website (www.theiceproject.com) or email me: Maurice@CE4CE).

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Islam and democracy share a number of common characteristics. Both start from a set of values, the former divine and revealed; the latter, although heavily influenced by the Judaeo-Christian tradition, essentially man-made. Both have developed over a long period of time and have been subject to various interpretations and re-interpretations. In Islam the *Qu'ran* and the *Sunnah* the traditions and sayings of the Prophet, peace be upon him (PBUH) have been interpreted in various ways over the centuries and present day followers tend towards one of four of the major schools of Sunni thought, or the several Shia schools. The *ulama*, scholars skilled in their respective traditions, continue to interpret divine guidance in the light of an ever- and fast-changing world. The basic core and essential message of Islam, however, remains constant. You cannot change the word of God but you can try to see what it means in 21st century Britain. You can try and follow the Prophet's (PBUH) example in our contemporary world. Islam is not a one-size-fits-all monolith. It is rather a broad mosque that has been adapted to the time, place, cultures and countries of its followers.

Similarly, there is no one model of democracy. Although there is a great deal of commonality, the systems, structures and definitions of rights and responsibilities do vary from state to state and are subject to constant debate and controversy. In Britain the debate is very lively and the 900 year old struggle for political rights and freedoms continues. What it means to be a British citizen, the rights and responsibilities such status entails, and the respective powers of the individual and the state, have evolved over time and continue to evolve. Issues like identity cards, data collection and the prevention of terrorism are very real, especially for the Muslim community. Liberal democracy, although rooted in a range of traditions, including Islamic, is a relatively recent construct with many of its major ideological and physical battles fought throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. It would be nonsense to argue that as our current form of democracy did not exist during the Prophet's era, or is not explicitly referred to in the *Qu'ran*, that Muslims cannot be active democratic citizens. It is tantamount to arguing that we should still travel for Hajj on ships and camels, and not make use of any modern inventions!

The nature of democracy and citizenship is outlined in some depth. Particular reference is made to freedoms and equalities because they have given rise to much Islamic debate. The detailed Muslim frame of reference provides the theological and spiritual background against which democracy and citizenship are considered. Democracy, justice, law and order and equality issues are analysed with Qur'anic and Prophetic texts employed to elicit the commonalities. The more research we undertake the more we realise how much of Islamic thinking pre-dates the 'western' model of democracy and citizenship. Models of consultation were enshrined in the idea of the *shura*, of *ijma* and of *ijtihad*. Justice is one of the fundamental bastions of Islamic thought, even when it goes against your own self-interest. Equality is similarly enshrined in Islamic thinking with the rights of women clearly laid out; as were those of non-Muslims living in predominantly Muslim societies. There is equal clarity about the greater and lesser jihads, and the absolutist position about suicide. All these contentious issues are tackled.

Constitutional issues are raised and the world's first written multicultural constitution, the *Sahifah*, dictated by the Prophet (PBUH), is examined closely. A very strong argument can be made to claim that the ideal of an active citizen is fundamentally Islamic as each of us is identified as a *khalifa*, a vice-regent on earth enjoined to do good works for the benefit of the planet and for all mankind. Identity and diversity within Islam reveal something of the enormous complexities of growing up as a Muslim within the UK. Again there is clear guidance in the Qu'ran and prophetic traditions as from the early days of Islam people of many different backgrounds and faiths became Muslims. Education and the skills of citizenship demonstrate the great value Islam places on learning; a comparison of the skills required to be a good citizen with Islamic values show their broad compatibility. The importance of discourse, of asking questions and the skills of resolving conflicts have strong Islamic roots. In short, the discussion paper attempts to demonstrate that to be a good Muslim means you have to be a good citizen.

4. PREAMBLE

Notwithstanding all the many issues that the ummah faces nationally and internationally, there are moments in human history when, to steal a wonderful phrase from the Irish poet Seamus Heaney, 'Once in a lifetime, the longed-for tide of justice can arise and hope and history rhyme.' (From The Cure at Troy, a version of Philocletes by Sophocles, published by Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1991) Perhaps, God willing, this is one such moment when hope and history can rhyme; a moment when, to continue the Heaney quote, we can:

*'...hope for a great sea-change
On the far side of revenge.
Believe that a further shore
is reachable from here.
Believe in miracles
And cures and healing wells.'*

I am very optimistic about the positive part that Muslims can play in helping to shape a modern British identity based partly upon the convergence of democratic ideals with the essential beauty of Islam, because the prevailing climate and culture of British institutions coupled with Islamic practices of community service and active citizenship provide a wonderful base for future developments. All the evidence we have indicates that young British Muslims are keen to take up this challenge.

British city skylines are adorned with Christian Churches, Muslim Masjids (mosques), Sikh Gurdwaras, Hindu Mandirs and Buddhist temples. British city streets are peopled by every faith and almost every heritage and language in our world, generally getting along harmoniously. It is almost beyond belief that the evils of 9/11 and 7/7 would have given such impetus to the already on-going debate about what it means to be a British Muslim and to the various organisations dedicated to better articulating that debate and translating it into practical action. Many Muslim organisations have received government funding to support them in their endeavours; others have generated their own income entirely. Some, like the Radical Middle Way, (www.radicalmiddleway.co.uk), The Contextualising Islam Project, the ICE and NASIHA projects, have Muslims as their primary focus. Others like the Christian Muslim Forum (www.christianmuslimforum.org) and the Common Word (www.acommonword.com) build understanding and bridges between the two largest faith groups in the world.

Similarly, it is almost beyond belief that, after the Bush years of moral corruption and hypocrisy, the most powerful democracy in the world would have elected a President of African-American-Muslim origin and one who within 14 days of his inauguration 'orders' the closing of Guantanamo Bay, and appears on the Dubai based Al-Arabiya TV station to declare:

'I have Muslim members of my family. I have lived in Muslim countries... the largest one Indonesia. And so what I want to communicate is the fact that in all my travels throughout the Muslim world, what I have come to understand is, that regardless of your faith and America is a country of Muslims, Jews, Christians, non-believers regardless of your faith, people all have certain common hopes and common dreams.'

He went on, using words that could almost have come from the conflict resolution lessons in the ICE project, to draw a distinction between 'extremist organisations' and 'people who may disagree with my administration and certain actions, or may have a particular viewpoint in terms of how their countries should develop. **We can have legitimate disagreements but still be respectful.** [Author's emphasis] *I cannot respect terrorist organisations that would kill innocent civilians and we will hunt them down.'* (www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/01/27/65087.html)

This article unpicks in some detail the underpinning values which allow and encourage 'legitimate' but 'respectful' disagreements, and seeks to demonstrate that not only is this accepted within Islam, but is also encouraged. Our argument is essentially simple:

THE ARGUMENT

Being a good Muslim within the context of the United Kingdom means being a good and active citizen. Indeed, in many ways you cannot be a good Muslim unless you are a good citizen. Islamic beliefs and values are based upon Qur'anic guidance and interpretation, and upon the Sunnah and the seerah (stories of the Prophet, PBUH). The values and beliefs of British democracy and citizenship are based upon a 900 year old developmental struggle concerning liberties and freedoms. A close and thorough comparison of the beliefs, values, skills and teaching processes that underpin British citizenship with the beliefs, values, skills and teaching processes that underpin Islam, demonstrates that the two are broadly mutually compatible. Further, bringing the two more closely and explicitly together helps Muslim teachers and parents in Tahdhib, the training and education for personal improvement and moral education. Similarly, it helps young Muslims develop their Akhlaq, which are their good manners, good temperament and noble character. The effective 'marriage' of the two will support further the development of Muslim British identity where people can proudly be British and Muslim. Finally active engagement in this debate using Qur'anic and ahadith sources as its base, will provide young British Muslims with the scriptural arguments to counter extremist ideologies; will allow them to demonstrate to those who seek to divide us that not only are they, to quote from President Obama's inaugural speech, 'on the wrong side of history' but also that they are the wrong side of Islam.

This article brings together much of our earlier thinking and work in the field of race and faith equality; and more recently our work on Education and Islam. It has come about because the School Development Support Agency (SDSA) (www.sdsa.net) successfully bid for a government sponsored project related to the teaching of citizenship in madrassahs, the Islam and Citizenship Education project, ICE (www.iceproject.com). We started from the basic premise that young Muslims deserved a holistic education, one in which there was some coherence between what was taught in the madrasah and in the home, and what was taught in mainstream schools. The project is timely because there has recently been a national on-going debate about what it means to be British and what it means to be a citizen. In addition, the place and nature of citizenship education in our schools is a very live topic. (See the Ajegbo report: <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>). Further, the body that controls the English schools national curriculum, the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) (www.QCA.com) has completely and radically revised all the subject programmes of study for key stage 3 pupils (11-14 year olds), and a similar root and branch review for key stage 1 (5-7 year olds) and key stage 2 (7-11 year olds) has recently been published. (See the independent review of the primary curriculum-final report <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>)

After wide discussion, the members of the ICE project's advisory board agreed that the revised programmes of study for citizenship would form the baseline for the development of a number of lessons suitable for teaching in madrassahs to pupils aged 9-14. Accordingly, the project core team, their advisers and the appointed madrasah leads from six areas of England undertook to examine the citizenship programmes and re-work them from an Islamic perspective. Forty-four lessons have been trialled in 30 madrasahs; the final 6 followed later. All the lessons and this article are loosely clustered along QCA lines that will be familiar to madrasahs teachers involved in the project and to citizenship teachers of 7-14 year old pupils. They are:

- democracy, justice, law and order
- rights and responsibilities
- identity and diversity.
- the skills of citizenship

Context is fundamentally important, so the article begins with an attempt to explain the nature of British democracy and citizenship. It continues with an analysis of the Muslim frame of reference and attempts to relate this to the issues that surround citizenship. It examines the four clusters in depth from both a citizenship and an Islamic perspective. It offers a simple British Muslim citizens' checklist, and ends as it begins, with reference to the ummah by quoting excerpts from the divinely eloquent '*Last sermon on Arafat of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)*'. (www.islamicity.com/mosque/lastserm.HTM)

5. THE NATURE OF DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP

Democracy is not a static construct. It did not come ready formed from the thoughts and inspirations of any one person, or any one country. Each country that has developed democratic institutions over time has its own unique form, particular to its time and place, often fashioned in blood and revolution. Although there is a great deal of commonality, the systems, structures and definitions of rights and responsibilities do vary from state to state and are constantly subject to debate and controversy. Indeed, Professor Keane in his *Life and Death of Democracy* challenges the time honoured view that all is owed to the Greeks. He argues against the established narrative that the Romans destroyed the Greek's invention, the ideas of which then lay dormant for many centuries until resurrected in the 18th century. For him:

‘The dogma of democracy’s disappearance from the world is a fraud, an unsound bias vulnerable to lots of contrary evidence that brings us to perhaps the biggest surprise so far in the early history of democracy: to the vital contribution of Islam to enlivening and geographically expanding the old principle that human beings are capable of gathering in assemblies and governing themselves as equals.’ (Page 128)

As evidence Keane cites the universalism and inclusivity of Islam, the rules of justice and law, social institutions, business partnerships and the mechanisms for consultation. His book will, without doubt, heighten the level of debate. In Britain the debate is already very live and the 900 year old struggle for political rights and freedoms continues. The Convention on Modern Liberty, for example, in February 2008 published an audit of the growth of the power of state since the Labour Party was elected in 1997. It chronicled 60 new regulations in 25 Acts of Parliament which, in their view have whittled away at freedoms set down in such key documents as the Human Rights Act and even Magna Carta. They argue forcibly that the government’s response to terror has led to an unprecedented attack on civil liberties which must be opposed at every turn (www.modernliberty.net). The government, mindful of such criticisms, in March 2009 published a green paper outlining a new bill of rights and responsibilities which the Secretary of State for Justice likened to a new Magna Carta. ([www.justice.gov.uk / publications/rights-responsibilities.htm](http://www.justice.gov.uk/publications/rights-responsibilities.htm))

What it means to be a British citizen, the rights and responsibilities such status entails, and the respective powers of the individual and the state, have evolved over time and continue to evolve. They have been wonderfully well

documented in Mike Ashley's book, *Taking Liberties The struggle for Britain's Freedoms and Rights*, published by the British Library as the compendium volume to their major exhibition (British Library 2008). Issues like identity cards, data collection, the British government's involvement in Guantanamo Bay, rendition, the prevention of terrorism and how individuals and groups respond to these issues are very real and very contemporary, especially for Muslim communities.

It must be remembered that our system of liberal democracy is a relatively recent construct itself, with many of its major ideological and physical battles fought throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The term originally comes from two Greek words, *demos* meaning people, and *krakos* meaning strength. More colloquially rendered it means power to the people. Although there are many different ways of organising these power two types of systems predominate. The first, with its more recent origins in 19th revolutionary France and America elects and gives most power to a president who becomes an active Head of State. These powers are normally coupled with a series of checks and balances to prevent too much power being placed in the hands of any one person. The second, based more upon the British model, elects a number of Members of Parliament and the leader of the majority party becomes the Prime Minister and hence the most powerful person. Under this system, the Head of State, like Her Majesty the Queen, has no real power of decision-making. Both systems have types of Parliament, a term which originated from the French verb *parler*, to talk; often with two houses like a senate and a congress; or in the case of Britain, a House of Commons and a House of Lords. As all members of the British House of Commons are elected by eligible citizens over the age of 18, the Commons is sometimes called the People's Palace. All systems also have forms of regional and local government with their own rights and responsibilities, but the greatest power is always held by Parliament. In addition, Britain as a member of the European Union has another level of decision-making powers which all 27 states sign up to and these are vested in the European Parliament.

Finally, common and crucial to all democratic systems is the independence of our judges, known collectively as the judiciary. Their decisions are taken without interference from the government of the day; in recent times there have been many high profile cases in which judges have ruled against the government. The judges interpret the laws that have been made by Parliament. As recently as 1st October 2009 Parliament decided to transfer judicial authority away from the House of Lords, by creating a Supreme Court for the United Kingdom in the historic setting of the former Middlesex Guildhall on Parliament Square (www.supremecourt.gov.uk).

Elected governments have a number of rights. These relate to such things as collecting and spending taxes, setting foreign policy, declaring war, promoting and passing laws that often affect the individual rights in areas like Health, Social Services, Housing, Policing, Education and most recently, Banking and Finance. Similarly as our elected representatives, government and Parliament have a number of responsibilities towards us that include areas like maintaining a system of government which allows free and fair elections and independence before the law, keeping us safe and secure, and trying to make sure that we can go about business and travel freely. Government is also responsible for guaranteeing our freedoms. One of the most famous freedom speeches ever delivered was the US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's speech to the American Congress in 1941. This was in the darkest days of the Second World War when it looked like the evil powers of dictators were gaining the upper hand. His concept of the Four Freedoms became part of the personal mission undertaken by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt regarding her inspiration behind the **United Nations Declaration of Human Rights** to which most countries are signatories.

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT: AN EXCERPT FROM HIS ANNUAL MESSAGE TO THE AMERICAN CONGRESS, JANUARY 6TH 1941

'In the future days, which we seek to make secure, we look forward to a world founded upon four essential human freedoms.

The first is **freedom of speech and expression** - everywhere in the world

The second is **freedom of every person to worship God in his own way** - everywhere in the world.

The third is **freedom from want** - which, translated into universal terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants - everywhere in the world.

The fourth is **freedom from fear** - which, translated into world terms, means a world-wide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour - anywhere in the world.

That is no vision of a distant millennium. It is a definite basis for a kind of world attainable in our own time and generation.

British law expands on these four freedoms and includes the equalities agenda which enshrines equal rights for men and women, for all ethnic, faith and 'racial' groups, and for people of disability and of different sexual persuasions. It also offers protection to individuals and groups from racist and religious attack and discrimination and limits the freedom of expression so that people cannot express or act upon, for example, racist or religiously bigoted views. It offers state aid and support if individuals are out of work, or are homeless and destitute.

Democracy, however, is not a one way street. Just as governments have rights and responsibilities, so do individuals. In order that we can live together in society we have to restrict our own freedoms so that others can enjoy theirs. This is famously known as the *paradox of freedom*. We are not permitted, for example, to be racist, to discriminate, to trespass or to determine the marriage partners of our sons and daughters without their consent. We are expected to obey the law, to undertake jury service, to pay our taxes, to go to school and to defend our country in times of war. We do, however, have the freedom to worship, to travel, to move home and generally to express our views. We can if we so wish oppose the government and ultimately, via the ballot box, to remove it and replace it with one of our choice. If we are profoundly unhappy with the British system we can, of course, leave the country. Not all countries throughout the world enjoy these freedoms!

That in essence, is the nature of democracy but what is citizenship? Democracy and citizenship is not one and the same thing as you can be a citizen of a country that does not practice democracy. The word citizenship itself comes from the Latin *civitas*, meaning city, and implies the rights of an individual to live in a state and enjoy the rights, responsibilities and benefits of living there. Importantly, being a British citizen entitles one to live and work in the UK and the European Union and to hold a passport that generally allows you access to any country in the world-subject of course to the restrictions of the foreign country you hope to visit.

Citizenship is not in itself a system of government but has much to do about one's own sense of identity and belonging. This sense of belonging to a place ideally implies that you share the values and ideals of that state. It can also mean that you have some sense of a shared and common history. Citizens of countries enjoy all the rights of that country. In Britain the term is often associated with active involvement, for the ideal citizen of the British state takes part in a range of activities which are designed to make Britain a better place for all who live here, not just friends, family or other groups to which an individual might belong. In short, the ideal citizen is an active citizen. In Britain a citizen has the right **not** to be actively involved in anything and provided they stay within the law can practice their freedoms without having to vote or to take part in political life. That is the essential nature of a democracy. Unable to find what they considered to be a succinct definition of citizenship the ICE team and its advisers formulated the following definition which they named *BIRR*, after its acronym. Coincidentally *birr* is also an Arabic word which means kindness, regard for your parents, gentle behaviour and regard for others, piety and obedience towards Allah virtues which sum up the values that underpin the ICE project.

THE ICE BIRR DEFINITION: CITIZENSHIP

Belonging: To our country, city town, community, religion, sharing our country's values in things like respect, tolerance, freedom and equality.

Interacting: Taking part in the life of our country and communities so that we can help each other to make it a better place for all to live in.

Rights: Your rights to live and worship in the country freely, give your views on political issues, take part in democratic elections. The rights of others to the same freedoms that you enjoy. Your rights to justice and to democracy. Government rights over you, for example in making sure you obey the law and pay your taxes.

Responsibilities: Your responsibilities towards each other, caring for other people, caring for the environment; not interfering with the rights of others, obeying the law, and going to school. Government responsibilities like spending your taxes in an appropriate way on such things as health, schools and security. Protecting your rights as a citizen like ensuring you can live, speak freely and worship peacefully.

If that is the nature of British democracy and citizenship the questions for Muslims living as a minority, as opposed to living in a state where Islam is the dominant religion, are very simple:

- Do Muslims belong here?
- Do Muslims share British values like respect, tolerance and freedom?
- Should Muslims take part actively in this society, seeking to make it a better place for all?
- Can Muslims exercise their rights to worship and to live as citizens of the UK without having to compromise their religious beliefs and practices?
- Can Muslims accept and undertake the responsibilities that are placed upon them as adults, as parents and as members of this society?
- Do the Qur'anic and prophetic traditions actually encourage Muslims to be good citizens?

To answer these questions we need to understand what being a Muslim means. Further, we need to examine the Muslim frame of reference and juxtapose it with what it means to be a good citizen in Britain in the 21st century; we need in short to *understand* the Muslim frame of reference.

6. THE MUSLIM FRAME OF REFERENCE

There are those who argue that as our form of democracy did not exist in the Prophet's era, or is not explicitly referred to in the Qu'ran, then Muslims cannot be active democratic citizens. For such people, western-style democracy is innovation, *bida*. But not only does this view completely ignore the generally accepted view of Islamic jurists on the nature and typology of *bida*, it is also tantamount to arguing that we should still travel to Hajj by ship and on camel, and not make use of any modern inventions! It is nonsense to argue that because no direct reference is made to democracy as we know it, we should not practice it. Prophets generally were more concerned with spiritual life and the hereafter than they were in establishing systems of government. Jesus made no attempt to establish a kingdom on earth; Moses transmitted laws but did not say how people should be governed. Interestingly, and significantly Muhammad (PBUH) did pen the first ever written multicultural, multifaith constitution, in Madinah, which established rights and responsibilities for those living there. Similarly, the Prophet's pronouncements on the rules of war and their later codification by Caliph Abu Bakr read like a forerunner to the rules of war laid down by the Geneva Convention over 1300 years later!

Some Muslim critics of western style democracy also argue that the only 'true' form of government is via a supreme leader, a Caliph, who in some way has been chosen. The problem here is that, although the central religious beliefs are the same, for much of the history of Islam there have been deep *political* divisions as to whom this Caliph should be and as to how he should be chosen. The Shias believe that the legitimate successors of Muhammad (PBUH) must be drawn from his family, the *Ahl al Bayt*, and cite an interpretation of Surah 33.33 and the sermon of Ghadir al Khumr in March 632 where they believe the immediate succession was passed on to Ali. The Sunnis, however, argue that Muhammad (PBUH) did not say who was to succeed him, nor did he lay down a procedure for selection. For them the leadership should be meritocratic, based upon piety and wisdom and open to any man. The Ottomans were the last Muslim rulers to officially hold the title of Caliph and their rule was abolished in 1924. It seems unlikely in our modern world that we will have another Caliphate similar to the Ottomans.

Thus, just as there is no one form of democracy there is not one form of Islamic government and many of the 51 Muslim states throughout the world have adopted very different systems. For Muslims living in non-Muslim states,

like the UK, our task is to examine the Qur'an, *ahadith* (sayings and deeds of the Prophet), *the Seerah* (stories of the Prophet's life) and *Fiqh* (jurisprudence) in order to see if the beliefs, values and practices outlined are generally in broad agreement with the beliefs, values and practices of British democracy and citizenship. Put simply, is the Muslim frame of reference compatible with British democracy?

Imam Monawar Hussain, in his *Questions and Answers Towards A counter narrative* which forms the background to his Oxford Pupils' Empowerment Programme, cites and clearly explains the famous hadith of *Jibra-il* where the Prophet divided Islam into three dimensions: Islam, Iman and Ihsan. (www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/) Islam is to testify that there no God but Allah, and that Muhammad is His Messenger (*the Shahada*). It is based on five pillars: that is the instruction to recite the Shahada, to pray, to give alms, to fast and to perform the Hajj. These five are the basic practices of Islam which every Muslim undertakes but there are many other Prophetic and Qur'anic commands to 'obey.' There are those that are common to most religions like not stealing, murdering, lying or committing immoral sexual acts, but there are also a range of other injunctions which are not normally directly associated with religion. These cover areas like inheritance, business transactions, dietary regulations, marriage rites and even permissible marital relations. In a very real sense adherence to Islam is adherence to a complete way of life, for practically every area of human activity is covered. When humans live this way of life, which is harmony with the will of God, that is Islam, because they are following the *din-al fitra* (the natural God-given way of life.) For Muslims the point of life is totally clear: humans were created to worship, to remember God sincerely and devotedly (Qur'an 9.31, 51.56, 98.5). One of the greatest acts of worship is to live according to the Divine guidance that has been sent to all mankind. Each human being in Islam is not just responsible for their own actions but for creating a just social order and looking after the whole planet as God's regent (*khalifa*) on earth.

God in His mercy has sent the same guidance to all mankind mediated through the words and works of the prophets. This guidance was always universal for 'to God belongs the East and the West; and wheresoever you turn there is the face of God. '(Qur'an 2.115). Throughout the course of his prophetic life Muhammad (PBUH) was the vehicle for both revealing and interpreting this guidance. Over time, a large and complex body of rules and regulations established by the Qur'an and the prophetic traditions came to be codified as the Shariah, which means 'the broad path (highway) leading to water,' the way of life that you follow to get to paradise once you die. Shariah is sometimes translated as Islamic law or 'revealed or divine law'. But strictly speaking, it is not law in the sense we know it. Its authorship is divine but

humans have to interpret this in the light of the context in which they live. This attempt to understand and interpret the Qur'an and prophetic traditions is called *fiqh* which literally means understanding and comprehension. *Fiqh* has, over the centuries, become a highly specialized domain of learning and equates in English to the concept of jurisprudence, the theory and philosophy of law. Only those learned scholars the jurists are qualified to interpret Shariah, and, skilled in their respective traditions, they continue to interpret divine guidance in the light of an ever- and fast-changing world.

Several problems exist with *fiqh*, however. The first is that there is no one *fiqh* recognized by all Muslims. There are four major schools in the Sunni traditions and one major in the Shia and their judgments are not necessarily consistent with each other. The second is that the western usage of the word law, that is, a set of rules which all citizens must obey on pain of penalty, does not include a number of Islamic Shariah categories. In Islam, some activities are required, some are recommended, some are forbidden (*haram*) and some are reprehensible. For example, Muslims are required to pray five times a day during set time slots but within these sets there are some prayers that they have to do (required) and others they may do (recommended). Similarly, it is forbidden to eat pig, but things like overeating, whilst not forbidden, are considered reprehensible.

Following and understanding this 'broad path' is not easy and many young people ask questions to aid their understanding. Thus, for example, in the British context a young person may query a particular passage in the Qur'an because they are struggling to understand the meaning. They may ask parents and family, who in turn may refer them to the Imam (prayer leader) or their madrasah teacher as they are likely to be the most learned in the community. It is unlikely, however, that they will be expert in jurisprudence so they might refer them to a jurist who in turn might refer to other jurists. *Fiqh* is a learned science and only those who have gained authority through intensive subject study are permitted to make judgments (*fatwas*). This, it is believed, is the meaning of Surah 4.59 in the Qur'an:

*'Believers obey God,
And obey the Messenger
And those with authority among you
And if you dispute over anything
Refer it to God and the Messenger.'*

Two points are of crucial significance here. The first is that key interpretations of Shariah are only permitted by recognized jurists who are those who

have the authority, for it is only such scholars who can issue their legal opinions, their fatwas. These opinions can change with time and place. This is well illustrated by the story of Iman Shafi'i traveling from Iraq to Egypt and re-writing much of his teachings in the light of the new situation. Even recognised jurists disagree, of course, over which of the ahadith are authentic and which unauthentic. Similarly, interpretation of the Qur'an is not always straightforward, despite the fact that there is only one recognized text. The problem is that the Qur'an is not a linear narrative and the same theme can be revealed in many different chapters (*Surah*) and these themes need to be drawn together and understood against their various contexts in order for the teaching to be understood. Context is crucial in interpretation, but interpretation is a science in itself and can be influenced by a range of factors including, for example, to whom the Surah or ayat was addressed, the special conditions/circumstances in which it was revealed and whether it was designed to be read literally or metaphorically. One of the major issues facing young Muslims is that they can be influenced by extremists who take certain verses out of the context in which they were revealed and elevate these verses to a universal position. This is particularly true with verses related to armed struggle and the position of the Jews.

The second crucial point is that it is a duty for Muslims to keep on asking questions until they understand. In the western and largely secular world in which young British Muslims live many new questions arise for which there is no obvious and immediate answer. For example, young Muslims increasingly want to know what is genuinely Islamic and what is more cultural, especially when some of these cultural traditions conflict with western values. Forced marriage is an obvious example. Despite clear Qur'anic and prophetic injunctions forbidding it, the practice continues. Jurists can and do give their opinion on such matters basing their interpretation upon the Qur'anic and prophetic traditions which have been interpreted over time. The word Islam itself implies submission and obedience to the will of God and His laws, but, because these laws are subject to human interpretation, it is not blind obedience.

If Islam is the first dimension, then *iman*, faith, is the second. Faith provides Muslims with the reason why they should act in certain prescribed ways. Discussion about *Iman* focuses on understanding, the understanding of the religion's basic beliefs. Iman is the belief in one God, His Angels, His Messengers, His revealed books and the Day of Judgement and Divine Decree. Many religions believe that there is only one God; the uniqueness of Islam is that this is at its core, as is the belief that Muhammad is God's messenger, and the last prophet. For Muslims, Muhammad's is the example they seek to emulate, for not only was he the human vehicle through which

God revealed his Qur'an but also he put into practice in his own life all that he said and did. Aisha, the Prophet's wife, was once asked what it was like living with him; she replied that if one reads the Qur'an one knows about Muhammad, and if one sees Muhammad, one knows about the Qur'an.

The third, *Ihsan* is excellence. To quote the eloquent Hussain: 'Ihsan is to bring about a synthesis of the first two dimensions... within the human being so that one's whole being is fused with beauty, kindness and excellence.' Ihsan derives from the word *husn*, which means good and beautiful; essentially *ihsan* is about doing well. The Qur'an states,

'Do what is beautiful. God loves those who do what is beautiful'
(2.195) and

'Pardon them and forgive; God loves those who do what is beautiful.'
(5.13)

Hussain explains that the root of the word Ihsan and its various derivatives is used some 194 times in the Qur'an and that just as the other two dimensions evolved into specialist fields of knowledge, the dimension of Ihsan is known as *Tasawwuf* or Sufism. 'Its vocation and discipline is the perfection of character so that the human being may truly realise his or her role as the *Khalifa* (vice-regent) of God on earth.' *Ihsan* is to worship Allah as though you were seeing Him because He sees you. It is generally accepted that this 'ihsani' intellectual tradition has produced much of Islam's greatest arts, architecture and literature; and its ethical and spiritual dimensions seek to cultivate that excellence of character, the *Akhlaq* that all Muslims seek for their children.

These three dimensions of Islam, therefore, are the most important determinants in the life of any Muslim. Religion should supersede culture, class, country and clan. The essentials of this faith unite all Muslims, regardless of sectarian affiliation or adherence to different schools of thought, but faith has to be lived to be real. The Prophet (PBUH) lived his faith and taught his faith daily. He demonstrated constantly that love, bounty, generosity and justice were the true values and repeated to his Companions that they should be good to one another, respect all living beings, nature and, most importantly of all, treat with equity all Muslims or non-Muslims, men or women, young or old. The Prophet stressed the importance of family values, of kindness and of tolerance, *'No one among you attains true Faith, until he likes for his brother what he likes for himself'* and, *'He is not a true Believer who eats his fill while his neighbour is hungry'*.

There are examples of the Prophet administering justice in favour of Jews and other non-Muslims over Muslims, as the faithful have to be strict defenders of justice regardless of faith background. *'Behold God enjoins justice and excellence (sincerity)'*. In Islam, this goes beyond the simple implementation of overt justice and moves into remembrance and the link with God, so as to nourish the notion of justice and bring the believer closer to the love and compassion of God. This is the central message in Tariq Ramadan's, *The Messenger: The Meaning of the life of Muhammad* (2007) where he aims to make the Prophet's life a mirror through which readers facing contemporary challenges can explore their hearts and minds and achieve an understanding of questions of being and meaning, as well as broader ethical and social concerns. For Prof. Ramadan,

'the Prophet's life is an invitation to a spirituality that avoids no question and teaches us... that the true answers to existential questions are more often given by the heart than by intelligence. Deeply, simply: he who cannot love cannot understand.' (The introduction page x11)

We do require heart and head to come together, however, when we are discussing one of the most commonly used and most misunderstood of all Islamic terms, *jihad*. Sections of the British media often use the term indiscriminately to describe acts of violence perpetuated by Muslims and mistranslate it as 'holy war' with the connotations of Crusades and old battles. Jihadis and jihadist have become terms full of negative associations and satanic forces. Jihad, like suicide bombing, is one of the issues many young Muslims want to discuss.

The word Jihad is derived from the Arabic root, JaHaDa which means to struggle, to toil, to meditate, to strive against difficulties. Razi, an Islamic commentator argues that there is nothing in the word to indicate striving with a sword and Iman al-Bayhaqi relates that when the Prophet (PBUH) came back from one of his military expeditions he said, *'You have come with the best coming! You have come from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad'*. They asked, *'What is the greater jihad?'* He said, *'The servant's struggle against his ego.'* Even at times of immense struggle, such as in the early days of persecution in Makkah, the Qur'anic message was equally unambiguous:

*'Those who struggle strive for their own souls;
For God is independent of all worlds.
And those who believe and do good works
We will pardon their evils
And we will reward them
For the best of what they were doing.'*

This message is re-inforced by ayah 69 which states,

*'As for those that struggle for our sake,
We will guide them in Our ways.
For God is with those who do good'.*

There are, therefore, two types of jihad. The greater, *al jihad al akbar*, is that of individual struggling to defeat their own animal lust and other base passions that are so destructive to the soul. Put simply, the greater jihad is the battle between good and evil that rages throughout the life of the individual as they struggle to resist the temptations of Satan/Shaytan. It is the greatest struggle of all because on it hangs the soul's later journey, either to paradise (Janna) or to Hell (Jahanam). All Muslims undertake the greater jihad. (Qur'an 17.19; 29.5-6; 47.31; 76.22)

The lesser jihad, *al-jihad al asghar*, which mercifully few Muslims have to undertake is the use of legitimate force against those who would do evil upon the earth. *'Fight in the cause of God those who fight you, but do not transgress limits for God loves not transgressors'* (Qur'an 2.190).

Islam, like Christianity and its just war, permits armed struggle, *qital*, but the key to this ayat is the word 'limits'. Ayat 191 goes on to say that, *'Slay them wherever you catch them, and turn them out from where they turn you out.'* Extremist ideology has taken this verse to justify the killing of all non-Muslims, the *them*, have removed it from its context and translated it to a universal principle. The *'them'* however, refers to those who fight you in the previous verse.

The Qu'ran is ethically unambiguous when it comes to defining the limits and nature of permissible war. It prohibits killing non-combatants, destroy crops and wanton killing of animals and destruction of holy places. Almost 1400 years before modern western powers accepted the Geneva Convention that governed the rules of warfare, Abu Bakr codified the rules of war in order that Muslims would not 'transgress limits'. He taught the companions the following ethics:

- Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path.
- Do not mutilate dead bodies.
- Do not kill women, children or aged men.
- Do not harm fruit bearing trees.
- Do not steal the enemy's food.
- Protect rabbis, priests and monks.

In addition, subsequent jurists have agreed that Muslims should not start wars unless they have the justification of self-defence, stopping oppression or defending the freedom of religion. On no account can armed struggle be used to force people to become Muslims. *'There is no compulsion in religion'* has become one of the most quoted ayats after 9/11. (Qur'an 2.256)

On no account should armed struggle be turned against yourself, whatever the cause. That is not to say that, in certain clearly defined circumstances, Muslims are not encouraged to die for their faith, to become martyrs (*shahids*) but, again, it is within the 'limits'. In Islam, as all in all major faiths, the position concerning suicide is absolutist and not open to contradiction: *'Do not kill yourselves. Verily Allah is merciful to you'* (An Nisa 29-30) and *'Make not your hands contribute to your destruction, but do good, for Allah loves those who do good.* (Baraq 195) In short, there is absolutely no justification for suicide bombing in Islam for it goes against the ethical basis of the lesser jihad and condemns the perpetrators to eternal hell fire (*Jahanam*). And Allah knows best.

The injunction against suicide and the killing of innocents are revealed truths, which do not alter regardless of circumstances. These and other aspects of Islam, Iman and ihsan are non-negotiable and form the bedrock of being a Muslim. They are however subject to human interpretation and each age and each culture tries to interpret these verities in the light of their own circumstances. Let us, therefore, examine in more depth from a Muslim perspective the component parts of citizenship: democracy, justice, law and order, rights and responsibilities, identity and diversity.

7. DEMOCRACY AND JUSTICE – LAW AND ORDER

No one religion can lay claim to the notion of contemporary western-style democracy. It would be anachronistically foolish to try to ‘prove’ that democracy was the product of one world religion by citing references to holy texts. It is similarly foolish to argue the opposite; to say that as democracy as we know it was not cited by the Prophet or first generation Muslims, it must be innovation (*bida*) and therefore *haram*. Although the concept of *bida* is technical and demands learned thought, there are those who take a literalist interpretation of the hadith, ‘*Beware of matters newly begun, for every matter newly begun is innovation, every innovation is misguidance, and every misguidance is in Hell*’. With such a view where do you draw the line? Recently some scholars in Pakistan issued a fatwa to say that television and the internet are *bida* and hence forbidden, but presumably they used modern methods of communication to get across their message; at the very least pen and paper and a postal service. Since the first generation of Muslims, scholars have debated the nature of change and decided what is and what is not permitted. T.J. Winters takes a definition from Imam al-Shafi’i, an authority accepted in Sunni Islam, who wrote:

‘There are two kinds of introduced matters (*muhdathat*). One that contradicts the text of the Qur’an or the Sunnah, or a report from the early Muslims (*athar*), or the consensus (*ijma*) of the Muslims: this is an ‘innovation of misguidance’ (*bid’at dalala*). The second kind which is in itself good and entails no contradiction of any of these authorities: this is a non-reprehensible innovation (*bid’a ghayr madhuma*). (cited in *Islam, fundamentalism, and the Betrayal of tradition* – edited by Lumbard, World Wisdom Inc. 2004)

For Muslims living in a democracy the simple question is whether this form of government is a non-reprehensible innovation and in itself good. Several Muslim states, like Malaysia and Indonesia (the world’s largest Muslim country), where Muslims are in the majority have developed robust democracies which protect and celebrate the rights of all their citizens, regardless of faith. Malaysia’s Anwar Ibrahim in his *Global Convivencia* and Abdurrahman Wahid, Indonesia first elected president, both eloquently argue the Islamic democratic case based upon Islamic principles in the context of their own societies. For us in Britain the task differs, in that we begin with a mature democratic system and, as Muslims, question our role within it. As

we have seen, it is impossible for any religion to lay claim to a one-to-one correlation between revelation and democratic principles and so scholars look to reinterpret key traditional Islamic concepts and institutions in the light of our contemporary world. The *shura* (consultation of rulers with the ruled), *ijtihad* (reinterpretation) and *ijma* (consensus) are the three most commonly cited examples of Islamic concepts that are broadly compatible with democratic forms.

Shura is the Arabic word for consultation, and forms the title of the 42nd Qur'anic Surah . Ayat 38 suggests that shura is praiseworthy but does not indicate whether or not it is mandatory, or who should be consulted:

“Those who hearken to their Lord, and establish regular Prayer; who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation; who spend out of what We bestow on them for Sustenance are praised...”

Surah 3.159 orders Muhammad to consult with believers. The verse makes a direct reference to those Muslims who disobeyed the Prophet (PBUH), indicating that ordinary, fallible Muslims should be among those consulted.

*‘Thus it is due to mercy from Allah that you deal with them gently, and had you been rough, hard hearted, they would certainly have dispersed from around you; pardon them therefore and ask pardon for them, and **seek their advice on important issues**; so when you have decided, then place your trust in Allah; surely Allah loves those who trust.’*

Sunni Muslims use the election of the first four caliphs, the successors to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as clear examples of shura because they were elected by their Muslim peers. Shia Muslims hold a very different succession line which stresses selection by right of the prophet's family not election. Both branches, however, have over time developed types of consultative mechanisms which still exist today.

Sadek Sulaiman, in *The Shura Principle in Islam*, argues that shura is predicated on three basic precepts. First, that all persons in any given society are equal in human and civil rights. Second, those public issues are best decided by majority view. And third, that the three other principles of justice, equality and human dignity, which constitute Islam's moral core, are best realized, in personal as well as public life, under shura governance.(www.alhewar.com/SadekShura.) There is obvious compatibility between British democracy and these precepts.

Similarly there is obvious broad compatibility between the notion of *ijma* and democratic principles. *Ijma* is an Arabic term referring to the consensus of the Muslim community on a particular legal issue. The hadith which states that, “My community will never agree upon an error”, is often cited as support for its validity. Although there is current debate about the respective status of *ijma* in Shia and Sunni circles, and contention as to whether consensus can only be reached by jurists or by the laity as well, the key is in the process. It is the debate that precedes agreement that resonates with democratic principles, rather than its relative position in shariah.

The same can also be said about the third concept, *ijtihad*, which is normally translated to mean a creative but disciplined intellectual effort to derive legal rulings for new situations from the accepted judicial sources of Islam. The Arabic word shares the same root with jihad, and indicates a struggle, an intellectual argument. In more recent times *ijtihad* has been used to debate a number of major issues like Islamic banking, mortgages and insurance and issues of *riba* in western societies. *Taqlid* (imitation and following) is sometimes seen as the opposite of creative thinking and stresses reliance on traditional Qur'anic interpretation, and there are scholars and Muslim groups in the UK who presumably have undertaken their own form of *ijtihad* and take a literal interpretation of the Qur'an and other traditions and thus do not wish to engage with western modernity. This is a perfectly acceptable position within a democracy, provided of course that they remain within the rule of law. *Ijtihad* is normally associated with scholars trained in its particular science but as with so many issues in Islam, loose or conflicting structures do not easily make for consensus.

Justice and law and order

There is no such ambiguity, however, when it comes to concepts of justice and law and order. There are some seventeen Qur'anic reference to justice of which the most explicit is 16.90:

'Behold, God commands justice and the doing of good, and generosity towards one's fellow-men; and He forbids all that is shameful and all that runs counter to reason, as well as envy. He exhorts you [repeatedly] so that you might bear [all this] in mind.'

In Islam justice supersedes all other loyalties:

'O believer stand firmly for justice, giving witness, even if it against yourself, your parents or your relatives.' (Qur'an4.135)

Similarly, the Prophet (PBUH) was explicit when he said, *'Hearing and obeying are the duties of a Muslim, both regarding what he likes and he dislikes, as long as he is not commanded to perform an act of disobedience to Allah, in which case he must neither hear nor obey.'* (Bukhari)

We have already outlined something of the genesis, importance and the complexities of *shariah* and its various interpretative *fiqh*. *Shariah* is predicated upon a number of divine values and principles that require context bound interpretations. Similarly, British civil and criminal law is predicated upon a number of principles which have been drawn from a range of sources over time. The issue for British Muslims is to understand something of the details of these laws and of the values that underlie them, to compare and contrast those with *shariah* and then, if there is a conflict, to decide what actions they wish to take, whilst following the Qur'anic injunction about hearing and obeying, providing it is not against God's law. Generally, there is compatibility but there are several areas of possible dissonance, often centred on the issues of equality.

Equality issues: race, sexuality, the role of men and women

Over time British, European and international law have become increasingly clear in their condemnation of discriminatory practices in terms of race, gender and sexual origination. Although cultural practices may exhibit decrees of prejudice based upon skin colour, Islam could not be more explicit about its position; a position which completely coheres with the prevailing contemporary law. The Prophet's last sermon at Arafat was wonderfully eloquent when it came to the position of different 'races':

'All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor has a non-Arab any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over white except by piety and good action.' (www.islamicity.com/mosque/lastserm.)

In one famous hadith the Prophet compared humans to the teeth of the comb and even made reference to the red race! *'Surely human beings from the time of Adam up to now are the same as the teeth of a comb are, and there is no superiority for the Arab over non Arab or for the red race over the black race except by piety.'* (Mustadrak al Wasail) That we are different is God's will, and part of His divine plan is for us to know each other and work with each other:

'O mankind We have created you from male and female and have made you into nations and tribes so that you can get to know each other...'
(Qur'an 49.13)

The position when it comes to those of a different sexual orientation is equally clear. Homosexual acts are condemned in Islam just as they are by some traditional Christians. (Qur'an 4.16; 7.80-84) The general Muslim view is to oppose any form of sexual encounter that is not both heterosexual and within marriage. British law permits sexual relations between consenting adults and forbids any discrimination based upon sexual orientation. These acts must be contained within the private sphere and the real issue concerning homosexuality is how Muslims should respond. Some, like Christians when it comes to homosexuality, oppose the sin but love the sinner; that is they try to keep the perpetrator within the faith praying that they may alter their behaviour. Others take a far less tolerant view.

A key British democratic value which is enshrined in British, European and international laws is that men and women are equal before the law and have equal rights. Those antagonistic to Islam often cite the position of women in the Muslim world as an example of how backward, primitive and discriminatory Islam is. They point to the growing number of *hijab*-wearing

women in the UK as an example of male oppression of the female and to practices in other parts of the Muslim world where women do not enjoy the same rights as men. Consistent with our argument we need to look beyond the culture of any one time and place and see what guidance we have been given by the Qur'an and the Prophetic traditions. The picture that emerges is different and is much closer to the western democratic pattern than perhaps could have been imagined. Historically, pre-Islamic Arabia was a hostile place to be if you were born female, as you had no rights and female infanticide was commonplace. Islam changed that radically because:

- Women were allowed to own property and dispose of it without reference to their husband. This right was not secured for British women until 1882!
- Women have the same entitlement to education as men. It is not merely an entitlement but also a duty. As one authentic hadith puts it, '*Seeking knowledge is compulsory for all Muslims (male and female).*' During what is known as the Golden Age of Islam there were many female scholars and scientists and Fatima al Fihri founded a university in Morocco as early as 859 CE.
- Women have the right to reject a marriage proposal.
- Women have the same entitlement to be sexually fulfilled.
- Women can engage in business or professional affairs: indeed the first person to become a Muslim was of course Khadija, the Prophet's first and only wife for some years. She was an extremely successful business woman in her own right.
- Women should be consulted in public affairs: there are many examples of the Prophet asking the opinion of women before coming to a decision on important matters.
- Women can keep control of their own earnings (Qur'an 4.32).

Other than bearing and nursing children there are no duties that a woman must do in the house. Indeed, the Prophet himself used to mend his own clothes, wash dishes and prepare food. He was especially fond of playing with and talking to children.

Debate about the position of women has centred controversially on the interpretation of Surah 4.34 which has in various cultures been interpreted to mean that men are superior to women, who must obey their husbands in all things. English translations vary but they generally mean that men should take good care of their wives, are their supporters, not that they are superior. Men have certain duties but there are clear limits to their rights over their women. An interesting interpretation of 4.34 especially connected with the verse which appears to allow the husband to beat his wife is provided by C.T.R. Hewer in *Understanding Islam the first ten steps* (SCM press 2006). Hewer explains that the context is one of *nushuz*, a violation of duties on the part of the religious wife. If she is unwilling to change then the husband should speak to her first, then withdraw from the marital bed. Only if she continues in these violations, is he allowed a kind of symbolic humiliation by striking her with a *miswak*, a small twig used for brushing the teeth. Even this is considered inadvisable in some schools of Islam, and any form of cruelty including verbal abuse is forbidden unanimously. If men abuse their wives they could suffer the double indignity of being punished under shariah law as administered in the UK *and* British criminal law.

In Islam men are permitted to have four wives at any one time, which is forbidden under British law, but they are enjoined to treat them all equally, which is practically impossible. Custom and practice in the western world now strongly discourages taking more than one wife. Women are not allowed to lead men in prayer in the mosque but this is essentially for practical reasons. The imam has to undertake and lead the followers in all the movements (bending and prostrating), which may be difficult if not impossible when pregnant; in addition, women are absolved of the need to pray formally during menstruation. For the same reason women cannot conduct the Friday *khutbah* (sermon) as the imam normally does this as part of *jumma* prayer. Women can, however conduct sermons at different times and can, in certain circumstances, lead women-only prayers. There is nothing that excludes them from becoming part of modern day mosque committees.

There is no debate about the fact that men and women are equal in the eyes of God for, 'We created you from a single soul' (Qur'an 4.1) and both are enjoined to be chaste and lower their eyes. (24.30, 31), 'And are close to one another' (9.71) and both can enter paradise. There are many Qur'anic references to men and women, none so clear as 33.35

'Verily, for all men and women who have surrendered themselves unto God, and all believing men and believing women, and all truly devout men and truly devout women, and all men and women who are true to their word, and all men and women who are patient in adversity, and all men and women who humble themselves [before God], and all men and women who give in charity, and all self-denying men and self-denying women and all men and women who are mindful of their chastity, and all men and women who remember God unceasingly: for [all of] them has God readied forgiveness of sins and a mighty reward.'

Similarly there is a long tradition of Muslim women interpreting the Qur'an; Khadija helped Muhammad to understand the revelations, and Aisha was known as a woman who was able to interpret some of the meanings of the Qur'an, the science of which became known as *Tafsir*.

Broadly, therefore, as far as issues of equality are concerned there is compatibility between Islam and democracy. There is complete compatibility when it comes to the notion of a binding contract which is as central to English Law as it is to Islam. In the Qur'an this contract is normally translated as 'covenant' and the word appears in no fewer than 43 Surah. Allah covenants with man and with his prophets. It is a two-way contract and the benefits for man in upholding his responsibilities to God are eternal. Conversely, those who break their oath to God suffer eternal punishment.

For the first time in British law migrants who would be citizens are required, after training, to take a citizenship test and if they pass are then required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen and make the following pledge: *'I will give my loyalty to the United Kingdom and respect its rights and freedoms. I will uphold its democratic values. I will observe its laws faithfully and fulfil my duties as a British citizen.* (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/britishcitizenship/.../oathandpledge/)

This is the covenant between new citizen and state. Existing citizens and those who are born and bred here do not have to swear such an oath as our citizenship status is automatic, but the government's most recent green paper, *Rights and Responsibilities: developing our constitutional framework* (23rd March 2009), rehearses the arguments about what it means to be a citizen, both in terms of the rights of the individual and also in terms of the responsibilities they have towards the state and each other. In essence being a citizen means you covenant tacitly with the government for it provides you with rights you can enjoy and the individual abides by the law and, hopefully, helps to make society a better place.

Significantly, the first constitutional framework was penned by the Prophet (PBUH), and the document is generally acknowledged to be the first ever written multicultural constitution. Known as the *Sahifah* it outlined the nature of an agreement in the newly-formed Madinah between the original Arabs residents, some of whom, the *Ansar*, were already helping the Muslims, the Jews who also lived there and the new emigrants, the *Muhajiroon*. Although the original treaty was later broken and fell into disuse, it remains an ideal model of what a Muslim state could be. Some of its salient features have a surprising 21st century ring to them:

- The three groups living there (Jews, helpers/residents of Madinah and emigrants) were described by the Prophet as one community.
- Everybody living in Madinah agreed to accept the authority of God and His Prophet as the final judge in disputes.
- Everybody agreed with the choice of the 12 men who the Prophet said would organise the community.
- Everybody agreed to co-operate to ensure law and order.
- Everybody was entitled to protection and support.
- Everybody was entitled to pray as they wished.
- Everybody was expected to defend Madinah.
- Everybody was expected to pay their taxes.

Laws in Britain, like democracy, have developed over a long period of time and each successive generation adds to the earlier canon. Many of the freedoms we enjoy today are relatively recent and the laws promoting racial, gender and sexual equalities have only been implemented in the latter half of the 20th century. It can be argued that many of the values that underpin these laws are Judeo-Christian in origin, and that taken together these values constitute what we understand as 'Britishness'. So, for example, British citizenship values include love, tolerance, respect, freedoms, concern for humanity and equality before the law. On one level it is straightforward for British citizens and any migrants living, working or visiting the UK. Shariah law has no legal validity and though shariah courts do exist to deal with issues like family disputes, and Islamic divorce, they have no national legal status.

What is clear however is that generally there is a strong correlation between British and Islamic values. Both stress common humanity, love and tolerance: *'He (Allah) created affection between your hearts, so you became by His grace brothers and sisters.'* (Qur'an 3.103). For Muslims it is part of Allah's test that we get to know each other, regardless of our backgrounds for, *'...We have created you from a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another. Indeed the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the one who is the most righteous. Indeed, Allah is All knowing and All aware.'* (Qur'an 49.13) Similarly there are many authenticated ahadith which stress tolerance and compassion:

'None of you becomes a believer until he wishes for his brother or sister what he wishes for himself.' (Bukhari, Muslim)

'The believer is one who is sociable with others, and there is no good in one who is not sociable with others nor in one who is not met sociably by them.' (Mustadrak, Bayhaqi)

'The best of people are those that benefit others.' (Tabarani)

'You cannot be a perfect believer until you love or want for others what you love or want for yourself.' (Bukhari)

There are also a great number of ahadith that stress the importance of giving charity, feeding the poor and the sick, looking after the environment and generally helping your neighbour regardless of their faith background. Further, Islam institutionalises charity by requiring the payment of *zakat/khums* whereby a proportion of one's disposable income is donated towards helping the poor. In short, from its inception, although it is not expressed in such terms, Islam commanded and encouraged its adherents to be what we would now call 'active citizens'.

Perhaps for active citizen we can read '*khalifa*' which is translated as deputy, or vice-regent. For, like Adam, the first human, all individuals are seen as God's deputies (Qur'an 2.30) who must look after all creation, must cherish the world and its people and bring it to a state of perfection. The responsibility that each human bears as *khalifa* is awesome but Islam, like democracy, also stresses that individuals have rights (*huqooq*) as well as responsibilities (*wajibat*). Muslim responsibilities towards God never change:

'O you who believe! Stand out firmly for Allah, as witnesses to fair dealing, and let not the hatred of others to you make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah: Allah is well aware of what you do.' (Qur'an 5.8)

We have already seen that all individuals have responsibilities as spouse, as parent or as child. These rights and responsibilities are an integral part of the identity of any Muslim.

8. IDENTITY, DIVERSITY AND ISLAM

For all young people, growing up in Britain is difficult. Indeed it is probably true to say that it has never been harder because our post-imperial world is one that moves at pace and, at least in our cities, contains representatives of most of the nations of the world, many of the cultures and languages and all of the major and some minor religions. For many young Muslims, growing up can be even more difficult because they may be from families who originally came from rural areas, did not necessarily enjoy high education standards and may only have had a limited grasp of English. In addition, many of their parents have an understanding of Islam which owes more to the prayers and rituals than it does to any deeper understanding of the faith's essence. Overlay this with an increasingly hostile environment, with the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim prejudice, a media message which can portray Muslims as the enemy within, and the fact that Muslims have some of the lowest educational attainment rates, the poorest health and the worst economic position in the UK (see *Every Muslim Child Matters*, Coles, Trentham 2008) and you have a potential recipe for conflict, both societal and personal.

We live now in what we call an age of multiple identities with, hopefully, the individual as an integrated personality at the centre. It is even more complicated for the young people for their identities are context bound. Hence, sometimes the English identity is to the fore, sometimes the faith or cultural or historical identity is paramount. Our young people will have a street identity, as well as a home identity and possibly a school identity. Sometimes these identities are mutually reinforced, sometimes they clash.

Citizenship encourages respect for different national, religious, ethnic and linguistic identities. Britain has traditionally prided itself on the fact that it has welcomed so many people from across the world and that, generally, these groups have thrived and prospered, and have taken on a British identity whilst retaining much of their heritage. The celebration of this pluralism is mirrored in Islam for that is part of Allah's design: *'If the Lord wanted it He could have made all people into one nation, but they are still different states'* (Surah 11.118); and *'Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the differences in your tongues and your colours, in this are signs for the whole universe'* continues Surah 30.22.

The Prophet's circle of *Sahaba* (companions) included the white Roman Suhayb, the black Ethiopian Bilal, the brown Iranian Salman, and Abdul-Salaam, a former Jew. He would often refer to them through their country of origin indicating his acceptance of Muslim diversity. For Muslims the key concept is the *ummah*, the body of people that is drawn from across continents and is representative of many cultures, languages and ethnic groups. The Qur'an stressed that, '*indeed the believers are brothers and sisters. Therefore maintain good relations between yourself and fulfil your duty to Allah. So that you may be shown mercy by Allah.*' (Qur'an 49.10) In recent years relations between some Muslim brothers and sisters who come from different sects and schools of thought have not been necessarily good, but the British context allows and encourages dialogue and debate, allows adherents to '*hold tight to the rope of Allah...and remember Allah's favour upon you: how He joined your hearts in Love so that you became like brothers through His grace*'. (Qur'an 3.103)

This notion of brotherhood was not exclusive to the Muslim *ummah*. Indeed, it was extended to all the People of the Book, Jews and Christians who were part of the Abrahamic tradition and whose prophets were lauded in the Qur'an and by the Prophet himself. As Islam spread and expanded to become one of the greatest of world civilizations it capitalized upon its religious and cultural inclusivity by encouraging scholars, artists and architects from across the world to settle in its places of great learning to debate and argue. At its height, for example, the House of Wisdom in Bagdad held over 400,000 books at a time when medieval Europe was undergoing what is called its 'dark age'. Standing upon the shoulders of the Greek and Romans and to a lesser extent Hindus and Chinese, Islam helped to fashion much of what we take for granted in our modern age: Universities, hospitals, medicine, art and architecture owe an enormous debt to the golden age of Islam. (See *1001 inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World, FSTC 2006*)

Generally this history and narrative, so crucial to the identity of young Muslims growing up in the UK, is unknown. Slowly and painstakingly Muslims and non Muslim scholars are reclaiming this 'lost' history, the 1001 inventions, this meta-Islamic narrative which reinforces the concept of British cultural pluralism and may go some way to help redress the prevalent Islamophobia and anti-Muslim discrimination because it demonstrates both the crucial influence of Islam on our world, and our shared history. Even in constitutional terms there are two examples which illustrate how people of different backgrounds could live harmoniously together and create a state in which all its people prospered. The first is Muslim Spain, *al-Andalus*, a majority Muslim state where all religions worked together to produce one of the finest flowerings of a cohesive society. The second, and in some ways even more relevant to contemporary Britain, was Sicily under the Normans. In times of such turbulence Norman Sicily was inhabited by Christians as well as Muslims, who were in a minority. Both managed to live alongside each other, prosper together and serve as an example of harmonious pluralism.

What is common to Al-Andalus, Sicily and of the course the Islamic Golden Age is a love of learning, openness, an *ijtihad* that encouraged creative intelligence, a civilisation built upon questioning and the power of discourse. Much of this thinking permeates the skills that young people need to become good citizens in the UK.

9. EDUCATION AND THE SKILLS OF CITIZENSHIP

At first sight it is perhaps surprising that Muslim pupils in England underachieve spectacularly. (See *Every Muslim Child Matters* pages 5-7 for details.) The situation is, of course, more complex than their position in the league tables would suggest and has much to do with ethnicity, heritage and social class. Furthermore, the narrowness of our data masks the many high-achieving Muslim pupils. The surprise perhaps comes when one unpicks the Qur'anic and Prophetic traditions related to education. The Prophet always promoted learning and said, *'Seeking knowledge is a duty on every Muslim man and woman.'* (Ibn Mâjah) For him, *'the cure for ignorance is to question'* (Abu Dawud), and *'half of knowledge is gained through questioning'* (Nahj al-Balaghah). The learned held a very high status in the Prophet's thinking for, *'A learned man among the ignorant people is like a living person among the dead. And everything, including the fish, the poisonous vermin, the wild beasts and the cattle pray for the forgiveness of the one who seeks knowledge. So seek knowledge, for surely it is a conducive mean between you and Allah, Most High. And surely seeking of knowledge is obligatory upon every Muslim.'* (Al-Amali, the fourth assembly)

Seeking knowledge, and learning the skills that underpin knowledge, is probably more crucial today than it has ever been for the traditional way of the teacher as the knowledge fount and the learner as the receiver of wisdom has been undermined by open access to the internet, social networking, blogging and twittering. The internet allows pupils access to knowledge, views, opinions and prejudices in an unprecedented way. Providing them with the skills to filter and absorb this mass of information is now one of the duties of every teacher and parent. It is, if it ever was, no longer possible to shelter young people from the many and sometimes hostile influences that assail them. Citizenship education attempts to provide these skills. It has recently undergone radical overall from a more passive often civics based curriculum to one that involves young people in the process of active citizenship. Bernard Crick, the godfather of so many of the reforms in his ground-breaking report, wrote:

'Education should not attempt to shelter our nation's children from even the harsher controversies of adult life, but should prepare them to deal with such controversies knowledgeably, sensibly, tolerantly and morally.' (Crick 10.1)

Crick and subsequently the QCA have isolated the types of skills pupils will

require for effective preparation for adult life. They include critical enquiry and research, taking informed decisions and responsible actions, how to conduct effective dialogue and methods of conflict resolution. Each one of these skills resonates with Islam. Islamic scholars and scientists and artists pioneered and developed critical enquiry and research methodologies upon which informed decisions are taken. The very word fiqh means understanding and enquiry. The Qur'an encourages humans to observe and question:

'Will they not then consider the camels, how they were created? And the sky, how it is raised aloft? And the mountains, how they are firmly fixed? And the earth, how it is spread out?' (Qur'an 88.17-20)

It further encourages people to discriminate in their choice of teacher for, *'are those who know and those who do not know alike? Only the people of understanding are mindful'*. (Qur'an 2.269)

Islam outlines the sorts of learning habits young people should adopt, based upon the notion of *aadaab* (manners) when engaged in dialogue. *'And do not insult and make fun of their gods, because they will insult God in a hostile way without knowledge.'* (Qur'an 6.108) It encourages the finding of common ground between people:

'O people of the scripture! Come now to a word agreed upon between us and you, that we worship none but God and that we do not associate anything with Him, and do not take each other for Lords...' (Qur'an 3.64)

It even outlines what you should do if you have trouble coming to this *'word agreed'* and promotes a system for arbitration in family disputes. (Qur'an 4.36) Arbitration based upon forgiveness and the suppression of anger is key to conflict resolution in both Islam and citizenship education. *'Those who overcome anger and forgive people, God loves such righteous people'* (Qur'an 3.134) and, the Prophet said *'Once Moses asked God, Who you love the most? God replied the one who forgives knowing that he has the power to take revenge.'* (Mishkat) The Prophet also offered a five-part method of resolving conflict. (See the ICE programme lessons on resolving conflict for more detail.)

Sadly conflict is part of the human condition in domestic, national and international settings. The issue for all citizens is how we should respond to conflicts we feel emotionally engaged in. For Muslims the ummah adds another dimension to our worries about the world. The skills of citizenship overlaid with our Islamic perspectives provide us with vehicles for attempting to help resolve some of the thorniest issues of our time.

10. CONCLUSION: THE PROPHET'S LAST SERMON AT ARAFAT

This is a time in history that troubles the soul of the ummah but there is much hope. This discussion paper has attempted to demonstrate in considerable detail the broad compatibility between Islam and British democracy and citizenship. It has been designed to raise issues, to challenge both Muslims and non-Muslims to think deeply and precisely about what it means to be a British Muslim in the 21st century. By extensive and detailed reference to Qur'anic and Prophetic traditions and the proud history and culture of Islamic civilisation, it has illustrated, beyond doubt, that British Muslims belong here, share British values and are enjoined to take an active part in this society. For Muslims this is a time when hope and history can rhyme. Taken together, and in its component parts, the paper undermines those who seek to isolate Muslims and encourage them to follow extremist and, perhaps, violent routes. For them the message is clear: they are on the wrong side of history, the wrong side of Islam.

Let the final word rest with the Prophet when he spoke at Arafat, for his words encapsulate so much of what we have been trying to say:

“O People, lend me an attentive ear, for I know not whether after this year, I shall ever be amongst you again. Therefore listen to what I am saying to you very carefully and TAKE THESE WORDS TO THOSE WHO COULD NOT BE PRESENT HERE TODAY.

O People, just as you regard this month, this day, this city as Sacred, so regard the life and property of every Muslim as a sacred trust. Return the goods entrusted to you to their rightful owners. Hurt no one so that no one may hurt you. Remember that you will indeed meet your LORD, and that HE will indeed reckon your deeds...

All mankind is from Adam and Eve, an Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor does a non-Arab have any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over black nor a black any superiority over white except by piety and good action. Learn that every Muslim is a brother to every Muslim and that the Muslims constitute one brotherhood. Nothing shall be legitimate to a Muslim which belongs to a fellow Muslim unless it was given freely and willingly. Do not, therefore, do injustice to yourselves.

Reason well, therefore, O People, and understand the words which I convey to you. I leave behind me two things, the QUR'AN and my example, the SUNNAH, and if you follow these you will never go astray.

All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and those to others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O ALLAH, that I have conveyed your message to your people.”



APPENDIX ONE: GLOSSARY

Adhab: correct behaviour, good manners

Ahlu I-‘aahad: Muslim people who are in minority status in non Muslim lands.

Akhlaq: An Arabic term referring to the practice of virtue, morality and manners in Islamic theology and philosophy.

Al-Azhar University: In Cairo, Egypt, founded in 970~972, is the chief centre of Arabic literature and Sunni Islamic learning in the world and the world’s second oldest surviving degree-granting university. It is associated with Al-Azhar Mosque in Islamic Cairo.

Ayat: Verse of the Qur’an.

Ahl al Bayt: Descendants of the Prophet (PBUH) and his family.

Bid’ah: An innovation in the religion, in imitation of the Shariah (prescribed Law), by which nearness to God is sought, [but] not being supported by any authentic proof – neither in its foundations, nor in the manner in which it is performed.

Bid’ah at dalala: Arabic phrase meaning ‘innovation of misguidance.

Bid’a ghayr madhuma: A non-reprehensible innovation.

Birr: Acronym for Belonging Interacting Rights Responsibilities.

Birr is also an Arabic word which means kindness, regard for your parents, gentle behaviour and regard for others, piety and obedience towards Allah.

Caliph/khalifa: Representative or successor. Sometimes the term caliph is also related to Imam or religious leader.

Caliphate: Early Islamic form of government under the caliph.

Civitas: Latin word for ‘city’.

Daar al Islam: The abode of peace.

Daar al harb: The abode of war.

Daar al ahd: The abode of a treaty.

Deen (din): An Arabic word usually translated as “religion” but also as “way of life”.

Din-al-fitra: An Arabic word for ‘natural God-given way of life’.

Deen al wasatiyyah: The way of moderation, the middle way.

Demos: Greek word for people.

Fiqh: Islamic jurisprudence.

Fatwa: A non binding legal opinion given by an acknowledged Muslim jurist.

Gurdwara: A place of worship for followers of Sikhism.

Hadith (Pl ahadith): Narrations originating from the words and deeds of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Haram: Arabic word meaning 'forbidden'.

Halal: Arabic word meaning 'permissible'.

Hijab: A Muslim woman's dress code, it is a scarf that covers the head, ears and neck.

Huqooq: Arabic word meaning 'rights'.

Ihsan: Arabic word meaning 'spiritual excellence'.

Ijma: Arabic word for 'consensus', especially amongst jurists, those with knowledge of Islamic law.

Ijtihad: A technical term of Islamic Law that describes the process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation of the legal sources, the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Imam: An Islamic leadership position, often the leader of a mosque and the community.

Iman: Arabic word for 'faith'.

Insha'Allah: Arabic phrase meaning 'by the will of God'.

Islam: Total surrender of oneself to God.

Jahannum: Arabic word for 'hell'.

Jannah: Arabic word for 'paradise'.

Al Jihad al akbar (the greater jihad): A religious duty for Muslims. In Arabic, the word jihad is a noun meaning 'struggle'.

Al-jihad al ashghar (the lesser jihad): The only form of warfare permissible under Islamic law, which may be declared against apostates, rebels, highway robbers, violent groups, non-Islamic leaders or non-Muslim combatants, but there are other ways to perform jihad as well, including civil disobedience.

Al-jihad al Kalima: The jihad (struggle) of the tongue.

Krakos: Greek word for 'strength'.

Madrasah: Arabic word for a dedicated institute where Islamic knowledge is acquired.

Mandir: A place of worship for followers of Hinduism.

Masjid: A place of worship for Muslims, followers of Islam.

Miswak: A small twig which is used to brush your teeth in order to maintain oral hygiene.

Nasiha: Arabic word for guidance/counsel.

Nushuz: A violation of duties on the part of the religious wife.

PBUH: An acronym used whenever the Prophet is mentioned. It stands for Peace Be Upon Him.

Qital: Arabic word for fighting.

Quran: The central religious text of Islam. Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind, and consider the original Arabic text to be the final revelation of God.

Riba: Arabic word meaning 'interest' in the finance and banking context.

Sahaba: Arabic word for the companions of the Prophet (PBUH).

Sahifah: The first ever written multicultural constitutional framework penned by the Prophet (PBUH).

Seerah: Stories and life of the Prophet (PBUH).

Shahada: The Muslim declaration of belief in the oneness of God and acceptance of Muhammad as His final Prophet. The declaration reads: laa ilâha illa Allâh, Muhammad (un) rasûl Allâh, which translates as "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God" in English.

Shahid: A Muslim martyr; a Muslim who has died in the cause of Allah.

Shariah: An Arabic word meaning 'way' or 'path', although in modern English it often refers to an Islamic concept, the wide body of Islamic religious law.

Shura: Arabic word for 'consultation of rulers with the ruled'.

Sunnah: The sayings and living habits of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

Surah: Arabic word meaning 'chapter' of the Qur'an.

Tafsir: Arabic word for exegesis or commentary.

Tahdhib: training and education for personal improvement and moral education.

Taqlid: Arabic word meaning 'imitation' or 'following'.

Ulama: Refers to the educated class of Muslim legal scholars engaged in the several fields of Islamic studies. They are best known as the arbiters of Shari'ah law.

Ummah: The Arabic term referring to the collective Muslim community worldwide.

Wajibat: Arabic word meaning 'responsibilities'.

The British Muslim Check List

As Muslims in the UK:	Yes / No
1. Are we free to practice our religion as we see fit?	
2. Can we read the books that are considered the important ones in our tradition?	
3. Can we speak freely and openly about our faith provided we do not infringe the rights of others?	
4. Can we preach our religion freely?	
5. Are we free to try to bring people to Islam?	
6. Can we build our mosques, madrasahs and community centres?	
7. If we are discriminated against or our religion is insulted have we access to independent justice?	
8. Can we write about our religion freely and publish in books and on the web?	
9. Can we educate our children according to Islamic principles if we so wish?	
10. Can we travel inside and outside the country freely in order to undertake pilgrimages and other visits?	
11. Can we take an active part in influencing decisions that affect our lives?	
12. Can we stand for school, local, regional and national councils and for Parliament?	





As Muslims in the UK:	Yes / No
<p>13. Can we try to influence British foreign policy if, for example, we feel it is likely to harm the ummah?</p> <p>14. Can we support members of the ummah throughout the world?</p> <p>15. Can we openly oppose the British Government's foreign policy?</p> <p>16. Can we purchase shariah compliant financial products?</p> <p>17. Can we dress how we wish? For example, in clothes that are Arab, Pakistani or Iranian in origin?</p> <p>18. Are we free to speak Arabic, Panjabi or Urdu or any other language spoken by Muslims in different parts of the world?</p> <p>19. Are these languages often taught in our mainstream as well as our supplementary schools?</p> <p>20. Can we obtain halal foods?</p> <p>21. Is there any area of life where we cannot practice our Islamic faith, provided we stay within the law?</p> <p>22. Is the Muslim frame of reference compatible with British democracy and with being a good citizen?</p>	



APPENDIX THREE

KS2	KS3	Lesson Title
•	•	What is Citizenship?
•	•	Guidelines for Holding a Dialogue
•		Enquiry and Research
•		The Masjid, The Madrasah, The Community
	•	School Council and Shura
•		Conflict in Society
•	•	Resolving Conflict
•	•	Dealing with Conflict
•	•	Law and Order
•	•	Tolerance, Respect and Love for Humanity
•	•	Community Cohesion
•	•	The Constitution of Madinah – A Multifaith Society
•		Living in a Multifaith Society
•		Living and working with others
•		Being a British Muslim
•		British or Muslim or British Muslim?
•	•	Volunteering and Giving Charity
•	•	Active Citizenship
•	•	Islam and the Environment
•	•	Diversity within Islam
•	•	Equality Issues: Roles of Men and Women
•	•	Dealing with Racism and Bullying
•	•	Rights and Responsibilities
•	•	Informed decisions and Responsible Actions
•	•	Muslim Women as Role Models
•	•	Dealing with Media
•	•	Muslim Heritage
•	•	Good Muslim, Good Citizen
	•	Understanding Democracy

